

Thyatira Presbyterian Church

Rowan County, North Carolina
[1753-1948]

Walter L. Lingle

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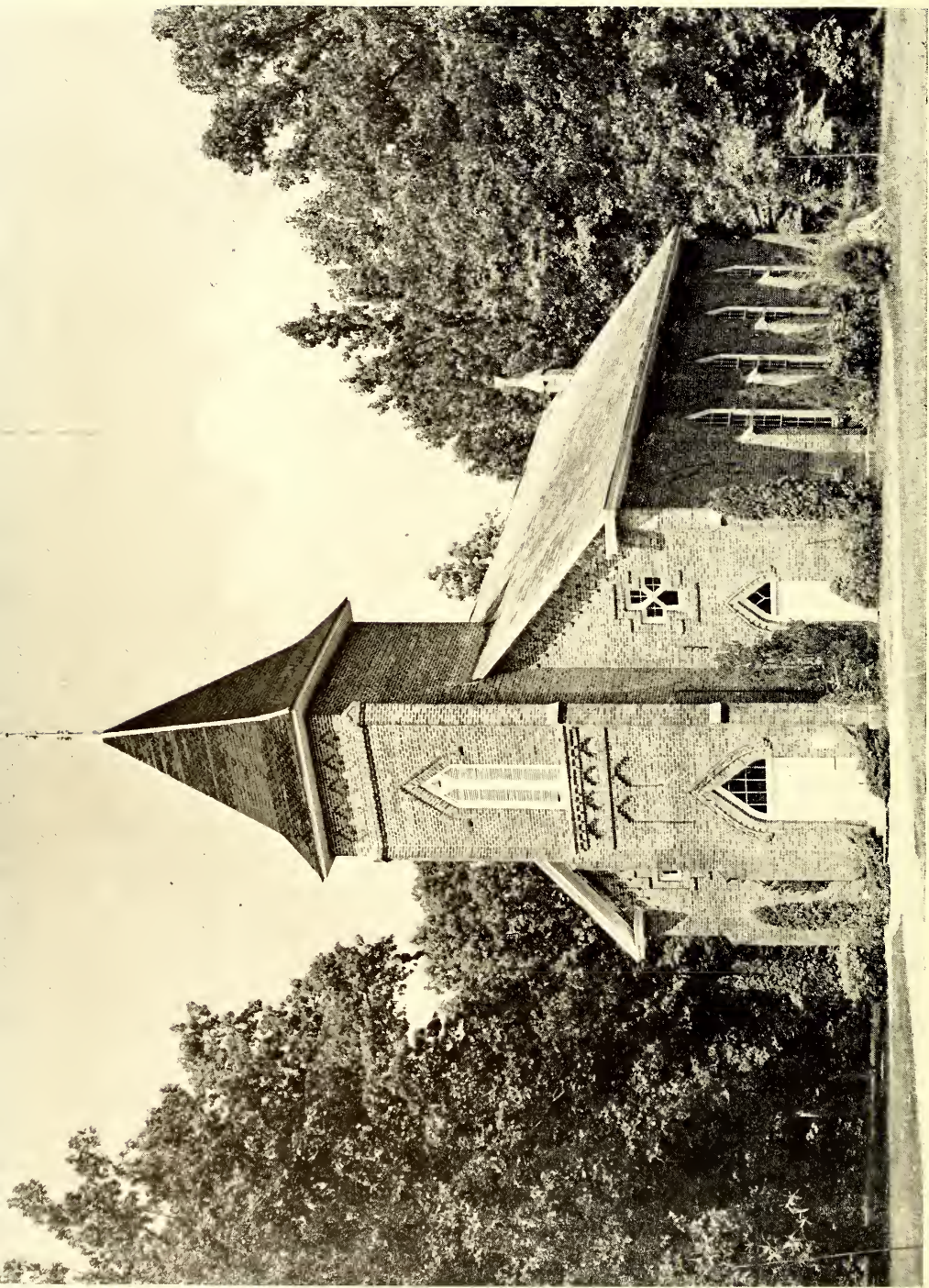
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THYATIRA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Thyatira Presbyterian Church

Rowan County, North Carolina
[1753-1948]

by

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PRESIDENT EMERITUS OF DAVIDSON COLLEGE



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INTRODUCTION

IT WAS at the request of the session and some members of Thyatira that I undertook to write this history. Without their expressed wishes and encouragement I would not have thought of undertaking it. A glance at the authorities consulted will give some intimation of the amount of work involved, but it has been a work of love.

The ties that bind me to Thyatira are very strong. First of all I am indebted to the Church for all that it has done for me and meant to me personally. And then there are strong family ties. I remember when my father and mother and their seven children sat together in the church Sunday after Sunday. In due time all seven of those children united with Thyatira on profession of their faith. My grandmother, Elizabeth Fisher Lingle and her nine children were also members of Thyatira. Many of these loved ones sleep in the old cemetery.

Although I am wholly responsible for what has been written in this history, I am greatly indebted to many others for the assistance they have given me. The pastor and a number of the members of the church furnished valuable information. Later they read the completed manuscript and made helpful suggestions. Dr. Thomas H. Spence, Director of the Historical Foundation at Montreat, North Carolina, furnished valuable information from historical records that I do not have. Mr. William D. Kiziah, Register of Deeds of Rowan County, searched out and copied records on file in his office. Later he graciously read the manuscript and suggested helpful additions. Dr. Chalmers Davidson, Professor of History in Davidson College, and Director of the Library, also read the manuscript, and made a number of suggestions. I make mention of all these not only because they helped and encouraged me, but also because they thereby rendered a real service to the Church.

This book is published with the hope and prayer that the past history of the Church may be an inspiration to the present generation, and to generations to come.

W. L. L.



CHAPTER I

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

THYATIRA is one of the oldest Presbyterian churches west of the Yadkin River, if not the very oldest. In fact, it is one of the oldest Presbyterian churches in North Carolina. It is located in Rowan County, ten miles west of Salisbury on the highway from Salisbury to Mooresville.

THE DEED

The deed for the land on which the church and the cemetery are located was made on January 17, 1753, and is registered in the courthouse in Salisbury. A duplicate deed was made on January 18, 1753, and it is also registered in Salisbury. It seems to have been a custom in those days to make duplicate deeds. Nobody knows why, unless it was to increase the fees of the register.

The church still has in its possession what seems to be the original of the duplicate deed. I have a typed copy of this deed made in 1910. It covers three large typewritten pages. Let me quote the first paragraph of this old deed, quaint spelling and all, as it contains some valuable history:

"THIS INDENTURE, made the Eighteenth day of January in ye year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Fifty Three, Between Jno Lynn of ye County of Anson in the Province of North Carolina, of the one part, And the Congregation Known by ye Congregation belonging to ye Lower meeting house between ye yatkin river & the Cutabo Do, adhering to a Minister Licensed From or by a Presbytary Belonging to & the old synod of Philadelphia:"

Note, first of all, that Rowan was still a part of Anson County when the deed was made. Rowan was set off as a separate county on March 27, 1753, and named for Matthew Rowan, who was Governor of the State at that time. When Rowan was first set off, it included a great deal more territory than it does now.

The deed indicates that there was a Presbyterian congregation in this community prior to the making of the deed. Whether it was organized into a church, we do not know, but there must have been some sort of organization as it would hardly have been possible to make a deed to an unorganized crowd.

We also learn from the deed that there was already a Presbyterian meeting house in this community, known as the "Lower Meeting House." Where it was located and what kind of a meeting house it was, we do not know. The fact that it was called the "Lower Meeting House" indicates that there must have been an "Upper Meeting House" somewhere. Dr. Rumple, in his *History of Rowan*, suggests that it may have been up on Fourth Creek.

By December, 1755, the name had been changed to "Cathey's Meeting House." The Rev. Hugh McAden in his diary of that date, refers to it as "Cathey's." The Catheys were prominent people in the community and their lands adjoined the church property. William Cathey was one of the first elders in the church. Dr. Foote tells us that the name was changed to Thyatira about the year 1764.

It would be interesting to know why Thyatira was at first called a "meeting house." Was it because the congregation had not yet been fully organized into a church? Was it because the house used for worship was also a general meeting place of the community for various purposes? Or was it because the Anglican, or Episcopal, Church was the State Church prior to the Revolutionary War, and had a monopoly on the word "church," while the churches of other denominations were known as "meeting houses." I am inclined to the latter view.

Another significant statement in the deed is that the congregation of the Lower Meeting House adhered to a minister licensed by a presbytery belonging to the old synod of Philadelphia. Thereby hangs a tale. The first synod was organized in Philadelphia in 1717 and was called the Synod of Philadelphia. It was the only synod until 1741, when there was a split in the synod caused by a heated controversy on two points. One concerned the education of young ministers. The old-timers felt that they should be sent back to the universities of Scotland for their education. Others believed that they should be educated right here in America, in Presbyterian schools that were derisively called "log colleges."

The other point of controversy was even more bitter. It was concerning revivals. Between 1735 and 1740 there swept over New England and the middle Colonies a great revival, known as the "Great Awakening,"



DR. WALTER LEE LINGLE
President Emeritus of Davidson College

under the leadership of such men as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield. These revivals were sometimes accompanied by shouting, swooning, rolling on the ground and other excesses. The old-timers would have nothing to do with this "new enthusiasm," as they called it. To make matters worse, some of the younger ministers said that the trouble with the old-timers was that they had never been soundly converted. So the Presbyterian Church was divided into "Old Side" and "New Side."

In 1741, the New Side brethren pulled out of the Synod of Philadelphia and organized the New Side Synod of New York, leaving the Old Side brethren in the Synod of Philadelphia. Thus there were two distinct Presbyterian denominations for a number of years. Happily these two synods were re-united into one synod in 1758, and its name was the Synod of New York and Philadelphia. It was the only synod for the next thirty years and served as a General Assembly until the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America was organized in 1788-1789. Now it was during the division into Old Side and New Side that the deed for the Thyatira land was made, and the deed takes the pains to say that their minister adhered to the Old Side Synod of Philadelphia. A controversy concerning revivals split Thyatira congregation wide open about fifty years later, as we shall see.

EARLY MINISTERS

We also learn from the deed that the congregation had a licensed minister at the time the deed was made. Who the minister was or whether he was a stated supply or a home missionary or a traveling evangelist, we do not know. We do know that Rev. John Thompson, an old side minister preached here as early as 1751. We also know that quite a number of home missionaries were being sent into the South about that time, but most of them belonged to the New Side, which was more progressive and aggressive than the conservative Old Side.

The most noted of these traveling evangelists was the Rev. Hugh McAden, who was a New Side minister. He visited practically all of the Presbyterian settlements in North Carolina. Fortunately, he kept a diary, much of which has been preserved in Foote's Sketches of North Carolina. The diary tells us that he visited "Cathey's Meeting House" on the last Sabbath in December, 1755, and says that "a number werè exceeding urgent upon me and very desirous to join with Rocky River in a call to me to come and settle among them." The matter fell through because McAden was New Side and some of the old-timers wanted an Old Side minister. Not only so, but Rocky River adhered to a minister of the New Side.

In 1764 the Synod of New York and Philadelphia appointed the Rev. Elihu Spencer and the Rev. Alexander McWhorter "to go southward, and particularly to North Carolina" as missionaries to organize churches, to help them in adjusting their bounds, ordain elders, and administer the Sacraments. These two brethren evidently visited "Cathey's Meeting House" but we are not told what they did. At any rate the minutes of the Synod tell us that "Cathey's Settlement" and Fourth Creek called Mr. Spencer in 1765, but he did not accept. Foote says that it was about this time the name of the Church was changed to Thyatira. However, in the minutes of the Synod of 1774, it was still called Cathey's.

After the manuscript of this history had gone to the printer, a transcript of an interesting court order, on record in Salisbury, was sent to me by Mr. W. D. Kizziah, Register of Deeds. The court in session in Salisbury in August 1770, took the following action:

"The Presbyterian Congregation of Cathey's Settlement by their Elders and others have signified and in open Court certified to the Justices thereof, that they have built a Meeting House in the Settlement aforesaid, called and known by the name of the Presbyterian Frame Meeting House, for the Publick Worship of God according to the discipline of the Church of Scotland.

'Tis therefore ordered by the Court

That the said Presbyterian Meeting House be deemed and held a Publick licensed Meeting House, and that all those who shall hereafter meet therein, shall be intituled to all the Immunities and Privileges granted by the several Acts of Parliament in such cases made and provided: And also that the above Certificate and this Order be registered."

This document indicates that the church had elders and was fully organized prior to 1770. It seems to have had a frame building by that date. I have always heard that the original building was of logs. The document also indicates that the name Thyatira had not yet been adopted, and that Foote was mistaken in thinking that it was adopted in 1764. Note that it was still called a Meeting House, and that it had to be licensed by the Courts before it could be used for public worship. The Anglican (Episcopal) Church was still the Established Church in North Carolina, supported by public taxation, and no other denomination was permitted to hold services without permission of the State authorities. All this was changed after the Revolutionary War, when complete religious liberty was granted to all denominations. This document tends to confirm my belief that Thyatira was at first called a Meeting House because the Anglicans

(Episcopalians) had a monopoly on the use of the word Church.

The Thyatira congregation had great difficulty in securing a permanent pastor. There were just not enough ministers to provide for the many new churches and preaching points. In the minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia for 1770, 1771 and 1774, the people of Thyatira made urgent pleas to the Synod to send them a minister. John Barr, who was an elder in the church back in those days, in his "Early Religious Experiences of John Barr" says: "About the year 1772 the Rev. Mr. Harris took charge of the Thyatira congregation for one or two years." The minutes of the Synod make no mention of this fact. Thus it seems that the church struggled on as best it could for nearly twenty-five years, with temporary supplies and visiting missionaries, but no permanent pastor.

EARLY SETTLERS

But it is about time for us to inquire as to who these people were who laid the foundation of this church in toil and prayers, and no doubt tears. Practically all of them were Scotch-Irish from Pennsylvania. Let us not be misled by the term. They did not have a drop of Irish blood in their veins. They were Scotsmen who moved from Scotland to North Ireland when that part of Ireland had been depopulated by war. They seldom intermarried with the Irish and if they ever did they had to bring their children up in the Roman Catholic Church. In after years, some of them and many of their descendants migrated to America. The large majority of them settled in Pennsylvania, which had been thrown open by William Penn to people of all beliefs.

Along about 1735 many of the Scotch-Irish of Pennsylvania began to move southward into the Valley of Virginia and from there into the Carolinas. Shortly after that time they began to arrive in Rowan and to settle on well-watered, fertile lands. Of course they had to clear lands and build their homes—the Indians had not been away very long. When I was a lad I often found Indian arrows on our farm. These Scotch-Irish from Pennsylvania, and a few Scotsmen direct from Scotland, laid the foundations of this church.

It is well to note here that there was another strain of migrants, of a different nationality, moving down through the Valley of Virginia into the Carolinas about the same time as the Scotch-Irish. They were the so-called "Pennsylvania Dutch," which is a misnomer. They were not Dutch at all, but Protestant Germans, Reformed and Lutheran, who migrated from the upper Rhineland to Pennsylvania to escape oppression and persecution. The Pennsylvania Germans settled in the eastern and southern

parts of Rowan, while the Scotch-Irish settled in the northern and western parts. At first the line of demarcation was pretty clear, but after about fifty years the descendants of the Pennsylvania Germans began to move into Thyatira community, and as the years have gone by they have made a substantial contribution to the membership of the church in numbers and in character.

DR. SAMUEL EUSEBIUS MCCORKLE

Being unable to secure a pastor in any other way, Thyatira proceeded to raise one of her own, and made a tremendous success of it. That one was the Rev. Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, D.D., who was ordained and installed as pastor of Thyatira by Orange Presbytery on August 2, 1777. That is the date given on the stone that marks his grave. Some writers say that it was April 2, 1777. He continued as pastor until his death on June 21, 1811, although during the last few years of his life he was incapacitated by illness. It was during his active pastorate of thirty years that Thyatira became thoroughly organized and thoroughly instructed in the Scriptures and in the doctrines and government of the Presbyterian Church. Those were the formative years in which the ideals and traditions of Thyatira were molded and fixed.

Dr. Samuel Eusebius McCorkle was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, August 23, 1746. His parents, Alexander and Agnes McCorkle, had migrated to Pennsylvania from the north of Ireland. In 1756, when their son was about ten years of age, they moved to Rowan County, North Carolina and settled several miles west of the present location of Thyatira. So Dr. McCorkle grew up as a Thyatira boy. Even when he was still a boy on the farm, it was evident that he had an unusually bright mind. In due time he was sent to Dr. David Caldwell's famous Classical School, on the edge of Greensboro, to prepare for college.

In 1768 he entered Princeton, of which the distinguished Scotsman and patriot, Dr. John Witherspoon, was President. James Madison, who was to become President of the United States, was a student there at the same time. It was said that Dr. McCorkle resembled another President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, and that they were sometimes mistaken for each other. They were both tall and well built, and had the same general features and complexion.

Graduating from Princeton in 1772, young McCorkle proceeded to study theology under his uncle, the Rev. Joseph Montgomery. On October 15, 1773, he was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of New York. That date is given on the stone that marks his grave. He was sent by the Presby-

tery to do home mission work in Virginia. After he had labored there about two years, he was called to Thyatira. According to Dr. Eli W. Caruthers, he was received into Orange Presbytery as a licentiate on October 1, 1776. At that time Orange Presbytery included most of North Carolina. Concord Presbytery was not established until 1795. Orders were taken for his early ordination and installation as pastor of Thyatira, but for reasons not given, the ordination and installation were postponed until August 2, 1777.

The Revolutionary War was on when Dr. McCorkle became pastor of Thyatira. Like practically all Presbyterian ministers of that era, he was an ardent patriot on the side of American independence. The records indicate that a considerable number of men from the Thyatira congregation enlisted in the American army. Dr. Caruthers, who as a boy sat under the ministry of Dr. McCorkle, tells us that when General William Lee Davidson, for whom Davidson College was named, was killed at the battle of Cowan's Ford on the Catawba River, February 1, 1781, he was wearing Dr. McCorkle's overcoat. He and General Davidson were born in the same county in Pennsylvania, both were brought to North Carolina by their parents while they were still young boys, and they were always warm friends.

On July 2, 1776, Dr. McCorkle married Miss Margaret Gillespie of Salisbury, the daughter of Mrs. Elizabeth Maxwell Steele* by her first husband. She was evidently a very attractive woman and made him a good wife. Dr. Foote tells us that they had ten children, six of whom survived him. Five daughters and one son are mentioned by name in his will.

Dr. Caruthers says that Dr. McCorkle came into possession of some Negro slaves through his marriage, but that they were a financial liability. They were indolent and he was indulgent. A neighbor reported passing by a large field and observing that the slaves were asleep on one side of the field and their plowhorses grazing, while Dr. McCorkle was sitting in a fence corner on the other side of the field, poring over a large volume with pen in hand making notes. He must have had quite a number of slaves as in his will, made in January, 1806, he willed nine slaves by name and a number of unnamed children to different members of his family. It seems strange enough today that a minister of the Gospel should have owned, raised, worked and sold human beings as slaves. I mention this, not to criticize Dr. McCorkle, but to show how times have changed.

*On October 7, 1948 the Daughters of the American Revolution erected a granite monument to the memory of Elizabeth Maxwell Steele in Thyatira Cemetery. In her will she directed that she should be buried there, and there is good evidence that her wishes were carried out, although there has been no marker to her grave in recent times.

Dr. McCorkle was an able and forceful preacher, and preached to the times in which he lived. He thundered out in the pulpit against the wave of crime and immorality that followed in the wake of the Revolutionary War. He also preached against the wave of French infidelity that swept over this country in connection with the French Revolution. There were also strong sermons on the evidences of Christianity.

He was a natural born teacher. The way in which he instructed his people in the Scriptures and doctrines of the Church is very interesting. Dr. Foote in his *Sketches* quotes a statement from Dr. McCorkle in which he explains his plan. He divided his congregation into seven or eight divisions consisting of about fifteen families each. Then he submitted to each division a list of questions from the Bible, beginning with Genesis in the Old Testament and with Matthew in the New Testament. An hour or more before the preaching service on Sunday morning he would catechize a division on the questions on the Old Testament, and on Sunday afternoon he would catechize them on the New Testament. In this connection he would hear the young people recite the Shorter Catechism. These exercises were attended not only by the division being quizzed, but by many other members of the congregation. Thus he moved on from division to division and from one book in the Bible to another. Dr. McCorkle adds this statement: "I have found it profitable to myself and my people, and can venture to say that as far as I have proceeded, there is not a congregation on the continent better acquainted with the Scriptures."

But it was in his classical school, which he called Zion-Parnassus, that he showed his greatest teaching ability. That was a unique name for a school but it was significant. Zion was the holy hill in Jerusalem on which the temple was built. Parnassus was a mountain in Greece where it was supposed the Muses, who inspired literary men, dwelt. In naming his school Zion-Parnassus, Dr. McCorkle was expressing his conviction that religion and learning should always go hand in hand. This noted school was located about one mile east of the church. The historical marker on the highway across from my boyhood home tells where it was located. Foote in his *Sketches* has this paragraph: "The first class that graduated at the State University at Chapel Hill consisted of seven scholars; six of these had been pupils of Dr. McCorkle. His students were, in after life, found on the bench, in the chair of State and forty-five in the pulpit." He says that he got the number of ministers from Mrs. McCorkle, who survived her husband about ten years. It is interesting to note that Zion-Parnassus had a depart-



Henry T. Gurley
ARCHITECTURAL ENGINEER

THE CHURCH AS IT ORIGINALLY APPEARED

PROPOSED ADDITION

ment in which Dr. McCorkle taught his pupils how to teach. It is said to have been the first Normal School in America.

Dr. McCorkle did a notable work in helping to found the University of North Carolina. The history of the University, by Dr. Kemp P. Battle, gives the facts in the case. Dr. McCorkle was one of the original forty trustees of the University, and served in that capacity from 1789 to 1801. Dr. Battle tells us that the original board of forty trustees "was composed of the greatest men in the State—senators, governors, judges of the Supreme Court of the United States and the State. Dr. McCorkle was the solitary preacher and the solitary teacher. He was one of the best friends the University ever had; worked for it, begged for it and preached for it." He took up a collection for the University right here in Thyatira Church, which is said to have been the only congregation in the State contributing to the founding of the University.

He was a member of the committee of trustees that selected the location for the University, and a member of another committee of trustees which was appointed to study the colleges and universities of America with a view to culling the best from them for our University. Even more significant is the fact that he wrote the by-laws of the University and mapped out its curriculum, all of which were adopted by the trustees after some slight amendments.

Dr. Battle, in his History, says: "It is certainly to the honor of Dr. McCorkle that, while he established over a hundred years ago, in the wilds of North Carolina, a Normal School, the first probably in America, he likewise drew up a scheme for the more practical instruction which all higher institutions of learning, at the present day, have to a greater or less extent adopted."

When the cornerstone was laid for the first building of the University, Old East, on October 12, 1793, Dr. McCorkle was the orator of the occasion. In concluding his address, he said: "May this hill be for religion as the ancient hill of Zion; and for literature and the Muses, may it surpass the ancient Parnassus." Dr. Battle's comment on the address begins with this sentence: "We thank thee for thy Golden words, venerable father of education in our State."

Many thought that Dr. McCorkle would be elected the first president of the University, but this was opposed by General, afterwards Governor, William R. Davie, one of the leaders in the founding of the University. He leaned much toward French deism and skepticism, and did not want a minister as president. So no president was elected at the time. Later Dr.

McCorkle was elected Professor of Moral and Political Philosophy and History, and it was expected that he would be the presiding professor, or chairman, of the faculty but he declined, choosing to remain with Thyatira and his beloved Zion-Parnassus.

I have thus dwelt at some length upon the life and labors of Dr. McCorkle in order that you might know something of the minister who laid the spiritual and intellectual foundations of this church; and that you might get at least a glimpse of the notable man whom this church nurtured in his boyhood days and had for its pastor for more than thirty years. His life and labors should be an inspiration to generations to come. Dr. Foote tells us that Dr. McCorkle, in his latter years, wrote a memoir of his life, but that the manuscript was lost in transmission from relatives in Tennessee to North Carolina—a tragic loss.

JOHN BARR

No account of the formative years would be complete without a few paragraphs concerning John Barr, the most influential elder during that era. He had much to do with the molding of the ideals and traditions of the Church. At the same time he set a standard for the eldership for all time to come. In 1814, at the age of sixty-five, he wrote a little book entitled, "The Early Religious Experiences of John Barr." I own a copy of that precious little volume. As the title indicates, the book is devoted largely to his inner religious experiences. It is the kind of book that makes one despair of ever being able to attain to such heights and depths in the spiritual life. The book also contains a sketch of the life of John Barr by his grandson.

John Barr was born in Pennsylvania in the fall of 1749. His father was William Barr. They lived in York County, which adjoins Lancaster County, from which Dr. McCorkle and many others came to North Carolina. In 1765 the Barrs moved to Rowan County and located on a farm about fifteen miles west of Salisbury, and a mile or two from the present site of Back Creek Church. William Barr, the father, died October 30, 1766, aged 57, and was buried in Thyatira Cemetery. John Barr married Mary King and they settled on or near his old home place. They had ten children.

John Barr had very little formal education, but he had a bright mind and a good memory. In due time he built up a splendid library consisting mainly of books on history and theology. Not only so, he seems to have mastered the contents of all his books, and thus educated himself. In co-operation with his pastor, Dr. McCorkle, he helped to build up a good library for the church. The remnants of the Thyatira library were still in

existence when I was a lad. I remember especially some volumes on the Scottish Covenanters and a large volume of sermons by Dr. Archibald Alexander, for family use. Those samples will give you some idea of the character of the library.

He records an incident in his little book which throws some light on a custom connected with the Communion Service in the early history of Thyatira. It occurred in the year 1773, when he was about twenty-three. He writes: "In the evening, Mr. Harris (the minister) called the young people together to receive their tokens. I took one with little expectation of using it. Mr. Harris, as he handed the tokens round, spoke a few words that affected me more than all the sermons I had heard for half a year. The words were these: 'I give you these tokens, not knowing your hearts. May the Lord give you a token for good at His table tomorrow'."

Maybe you are wondering what is meant by the "tokens" referred to in the above paragraph. It was the custom in those early days to guard carefully the Lord's table to see that no unworthy person received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. A token was a little metal disk, not quite as large as a nickel. A day or more before the Communion Service, all those who were believed to be worthy were supplied with tokens which had to be presented on the Sabbath before they could be admitted to the Lord's table. They served as cards of admission. That custom was practically universal in those days among the Presbyterian churches of America, Ireland and Scotland.

John Barr was made a ruling elder early in life and filled that office with devotion for many years. His grandson tells us that among the many other things he did, he taught a class of Negro slaves in the Sunday School. He read through the New Testament every year and through the Old Testament every three years for thirty-nine years. His knowledge of the Bible was phenomenal. Following the Scotch Presbyterian custom, he had family prayers morning and evening.

In order that we may see how times and Christian ideals have changed, I quote here a paragraph concerning John Barr, from the pen of his grandson: "Strange as it may seem, the temperance reformation found him not only the owner of a fruit distillery, but engaged himself in the manufacture of the most abundant of all causes of misery and crime. How his attention was first turned to a consideration of the evil he was promoting, it would be tedious fully to relate, as also what led to not only a change in his views, but to the abandoning of the manufacture. Suffice it to say, though he had recently erected a spacious distillery and at much cost had newly fitted up

the apparatus of death, he at once arrested the progress of the work and with his name to the pledge, he lent all his counsel, his influence and his example to the furtherance of that cause."

When Back Creek was organized in 1805, John Barr moved his membership from Thyatira and he became an elder in that church. He died November 10, 1831, and was buried beside his wife in Thyatira Cemetery.

OTHER ELDERS IN THE EARLY DAYS

Of course there were other good elders during those early years, but we know very little about them. There are no church records for the first seventy-five or eighty years. If any were kept, they have been lost or destroyed. Dr. S. C. Alexander, in his history, gives the names of quite a number of those early elders, eulogizes them in general terms but gives very few facts about their lives and labors. We do not know when they were elected or how long they served. I will give the names as he gives them and such facts as I have been able to find.

Alexander McCorkle, the father of Dr. Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, was an elder. Dr. Foote, who published his *Sketches of North Carolina* in 1846, writes thus of Dr. McCorkle's parents: "His parents were pious people, and constant attendants at Cathey's Meeting House, and Thyatira, when there was preaching. After their son became the minister, a gentleman, now living in Salisbury, says he often saw the old gentleman, who was a ruling elder in the church, sitting on the pulpit stairs, on account of his deafness, that he might get as near as possible to his son while preaching." He is buried in Thyatira Cemetery and the gravestone says that he died on December 24, 1800, at the age of 78. His wife, Agnes McCorkle, is buried beside him. The gravestone says that she died on September 5, 1789, at the age of 63.

William Cathey was also an elder, but we have no data about him. He was probably buried in the Thyatira Cemetery, but if so, his grave is not marked.

John McNeely was another elder. He was born in 1724 and died in 1801. He was probably buried in the cemetery, but there is no marker to his grave.

James Graham was one of the first elders. Dr. Alexander says that he was born in Scotland in 1695 and died in 1782. In the cemetery there is a marker to the memory of a James Graham who died in 1782, but he was only 36 years of age. There is a marker in memory of another James Graham, who died in 1758 at the age of 88. That was just five years after the church deed was made. He may have been one of the very first elders.

John Dobbin was also one of the first elders, but we have no facts about him. If he is buried in the cemetery, there is no marker to his grave.

Samuel Barkley was one of the early elders, but we have no data about him. If he is buried in the cemetery, there is no marker to his grave.

William Bowman was still another early elder. His gravestone states that he died on March 11, 1795, at the age of 67. Dr. Alexander says that he was killed while coming home from Salisbury in his wagon. Two of his sons entered the ministry.

Thomas King was an elder in Thyatira, but went to Back Creek when that church was organized in 1805, and became an elder there. He died on October 16, 1812, at the age of 62, and was buried in the Thyatira Cemetery.

Thomas Gillespie was another Thyatira elder who moved his membership to Back Creek in 1805 and became an elder there. Dr. Alexander says that he moved from there to Tennessee and was buried somewhere in that State.

Abraham Lowrance was another elder who moved to Back Creek in 1805 and became an elder there. Later he moved to Statesville.

William Bell was still another elder who moved his membership to Back Creek in 1805 and became an elder in that church.

Thomas Cowan was an elder who stuck by Thyatira when the colony went off to found Back Creek in 1805. The records tell us that he appeared before Concord Presbytery to protest against the movement to found Back Creek. His gravestone says that he died in 1817, at the age of 70. When Dr. Alexander made the centennial address in 1855, some five years before the present church building was erected, he said of Thomas Cowan: "This venerable house, now moldering with age, bears witness to his zeal and energy; for he was one of the leading spirits that assisted in its erection." That statement throws some light on the church building that preceded the present one.

Joseph Kerr was born in 1762 and died on March 24, 1829. When he was elected an elder and how long he served we do not know.

James Stewart was an elder about whom we have no data, except that his son, William, became a Presbyterian minister.

James McCulloch is another elder concerning whom we have no information except that he died in 1812.

William Cowan was a half brother of Thomas Cowan. He died December 29, 1839, aged seventy.

John Reed, another elder, moved to Tennessee after the death of Dr. McCorkle.

Richard Gillespie, an elder, died December 8, 1830, aged sixty-three.

William Gibson, an elder, married Priscilla Brandon, and their son, James Brandon Gibson, was an elder in Thyatira for many years.

Francis Gibson, an elder, married Elizabeth Brandon. When he was elected or how long he served is not known.

In his centennial address in 1855, Dr. Alexander gives the names of the following elders, without giving any information about them: William Chambers, James Gillespie, William Miller and Henry Winder. He also tells us that these and all the above elders had gone to their reward before the centennial, some of them long before.

James Silliman was the father of John P. Silliman and the grandfather of Hugh Silliman, both of whom became elders in after years. These three Sillimans were elders in Thyatira for a total of more than a hundred years. We have very little data about James Silliman. He took an active part in the organization of the Congregational Bible Society at Thyatira in 1827, and was probably an elder at that time. He died September 18, 1848, aged sixty-three.

James Caruthers, was the only one of these early elders living at the time of the centennial. Dr. Alexander tells us that he was nearly ninety at that time. The United States census of 1850 lists James Caruthers, aged 84; and his wife, Elizabeth Caruthers, aged 77. It is my impression that they were the parents of Dr. Eli W. Caruthers, the noted Presbyterian minister, who was born October 26, 1793. The first mention made of James Caruthers is in connection with the re-survey which was made on June 3, 1809, of the land on which Thyatira stands. His name is signed to that document. He also took an active part in the organization of the Congregational Bible Society in 1827. He must have been a very active and efficient elder.

All these helped to lay the spiritual foundations of Thyatira Church during the formative years. Of them might be what was said of King David: "After they had served their generation by the will of God, they fell on sleep and were laid unto their fathers."

THE CEMETERY

The cemetery is the place where we bury our beloved dead. It is also a place that enshrines much history and many precious memories. As we have already seen, the land on which the church and cemetery are located was purchased on January 17, 1753. The cemetery at first was evidently a rather small area at the northern end of the present cemetery, which has been enlarged from time to time. In fact, it has been much enlarged within my memory.

In 1940 a copy was made of all names and dates and inscriptions on the tombstones and monuments in the cemetery. These were typed on long sheets of paper. There were at that time 530 names. It is evident that there are many unmarked graves, especially in the old part of the cemetery. Some of those that were originally marked have been so worn down by time that the names and dates are no longer legible.

Let us look at the five oldest graves that are marked. They are as follows: *John Nisbet*, died November 19, 1755, aged 50; *John Brandon*, died May 15, 1756, aged 65; *William Brandon*, died in 1756, aged 30; *James Graham*, died February 1, 1758, aged 88; *John Knox*, died October 25, 1758, aged 50. Note that all these died within five years after the land for the cemetery was purchased. It is probable that there are some unmarked graves older than these.

In order to get a cross section of the names of the early settlers, I tabulated the names of all those who died prior to 1800. There are eighty-one in all. Of these the name Brandon occurs eight times, Graham seven times, Gillespie five times, Locke five times, Barr five times, McCorkle four times, Hart four times, Kerr three times, Lowrance three times. Other well-known names occurring less frequently are: Armstrong, Cathey, Gibson, King, Knox, Luckie, Miller, Morrison, McNeely, Steele, Thompson, Troy and Young.

All these are good Scotch-Irish or Scotch names, except Brandon which is of English origin. No doubt there are other family names represented in the unmarked graves of those who died prior to 1800. Not only so but there were other settlers who were buried elsewhere or moved to other communities. But the above names give us some idea of the people who laid the foundations of the Thyatira community.

I also found it interesting to note the names that occur ten times or more in the entire cemetery. They are as follows: Graham 29 times, Cowan 29, Gillespie 23, Locke 22, Sloan 18, Brandon 16, McCorkle 16, Miller 14, Carrigan 13, Hall 12, Hyde 11, and Silliman 11. It will be observed that all these are Scotch-Irish or Scotch names, except Brandon. As noted previously, Thyatira now has a considerable number of substantial members of German descent, but they were not among the early settlers.

Let us look at some of the individual markers and monuments in the old part of the cemetery. I have already spoken of the graves of Dr. McCorkle, of his parents and of John Barr.

On the western side of the cemetery, an attractive memorial stone marks the graves of John Knox and his wife, Jean Gracy Knox, natives of

Scotland, who were among the earliest settlers in the Thyatira community. He died in 1758 and she died in 1772. The memorial stone tells us that seven of their sons were soldiers in the American Revolution and that they were the great-grandparents of James Knox Polk, President of the United States.

Next we come to the grave of Thomas and Naomi Gillespie, who are also ancestors of President James Knox Polk. Their daughter Lydia married Captain James Knox, son of John and Jean Gracy Knox, and was the grandmother of President Polk. Mr. William D. Kizziah, of Salisbury, has furnished me the following newspaper item which he discovered in the files of the North Carolina Historical Commission in Raleigh. It was published in the North Carolina Journal January 9, 1797, and reads as follows:

"Died at 2 p.m. on Tuesday the 15th. of December, 1796, Mrs. Naomi Gillespie, aged 69; at 10 o'clock the same evening, Mr. Thomas Gillespie, aged 76. They were the first settlers in Rowan County on the west side of the Yadkin River, and lived in the strictest bond of matrimonial friendship for the space of 51 years. Their descendents amount to 63, of whom six sons carried them to their place of interment, where they were deposited in the same coffin. The history of North Carolina has perhaps never furnished a similar instance since its first settlement."

Let us also pause at the grave of Captain William Armstrong who was mortally wounded at the battle of Ramseur's Mill in the Revolutionary War, and died the next day, June 21, 1780, aged 41.

Nearby is the grave of another Revolutionary soldier, Captain Thomas Cowan, who was born January 23, 1748, and died December 4, 1817. He was in the battles of King's Mountain, Cowpens, and Ramseur's Mill. As noted in another place, he was an elder in Thyatira Church. He was also the great grandfather of Mr. B. Scott Krider, who is an elder at this time (1948); and built and lived in the brick residence near Bear Poplar in which Mr. Krider now lives.

An interesting grave is that of Henry Barkley, Jr., who died February 5, 1776, aged 17. His father, Henry Barkley, Sr., who was probably buried in Thyatira Cemetery, in an unmarked grave, was the ancestor of Senator Alben Barkley of Kentucky, who was the majority leader of the United States Senate during the long administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and who was elected vice-president of the United States in 1948.

On the east side of the Cemetery are the graves of the Lockes and the Brandons, who were prominent in the political and social life of the county and state. Most of these families lived five or six miles southeast of Thyatira



VIEW OF THE PULPIT UNTIL 1938

NEW PULPIT BUILT IN 1942

FIRST ORGAN IN THE CHURCH

OLD COMMUNION SET INCLUDING THE CASE
AND TABLECLOTH

REAR INTERIOR SHOWING THE GALLERY

on large plantations. There was much intermarrying between the Lockes and Brandons.

The grave of the Honorable Matthew Locke is marked by a modest granite stone, which says that he died on September 7, 1801, aged 71. He was one of the largest slaveholders in Rowan County and was a noted politician. For many years he represented Rowan in the State House of Representatives and Senate. He was a member of the Provincial Congress on three separate occasions, and a member of the United States Congress from 1793 to 1799, where he was an ardent Jeffersonian. His wife, who was Mary Brandon, is buried beside him, and the stone that marks her grave bears a very beautiful epitaph. Locke township in Rowan County was named in honor of Matthew Locke.

Col. Francis Locke, the brother of Matthew Locke, was Rowan's most distinguished soldier in the American Revolution. During the years of the Revolution he was closely associated with General William Lee Davidson for whom Davidson College was named. He married Anna Brandon, the sister of Mrs. Matthew Locke. The bodies of Col. and Mrs. Francis Locke rest in unmarked graves in the Locke section of the cemetery. Their son, Judge Francis Locke, left in his will an adequate sum of money to erect a monument to their memories, but for some reason, the executors never erected it.

The most prominent monument in the Locke section marks the grave of Judge Francis Locke. He was born October 31, 1766 and died January 30, 1823. From 1803 to 1813, he was judge of the Superior Court. He was then elected to the United States Senate. For some reason he resigned as senator before he ever took his seat.

Matthew Brandon who died in 1819, at the age of 68, represented Rowan County in the State Legislature for four terms.

Col. Alexander Brandon, who died in 1854, at the age of 63, also represented Rowan in the State Legislature. In his will he left four hundred dollars to the elders of the church to be used in keeping the cemetery in repair. He also left Davidson College \$3,000.00, to be used in educating candidates for the ministry.

Tradition says that Betsy (Elizabeth) Brandon is buried in an unmarked grave in Thyatira Cemetery, but I have not been able to discover any positive proof.* Her mother was Margaret Locke, the sister of the Hon.

*After this manuscript had gone to the printer I learned on good authority that Col. Francis McCorkle and his wife (Betsy Brandon) are buried in the old McCorkle burying ground in Lincoln County near the village of Denver.

Matthew Locke. I refer to Betsy Brandon here because there is a beautiful story about her that used to be printed in the school readers. It runs thus with variations: In the spring of 1791 General George Washington, then President of the United States, made a grand tour through the south. On his return trip, he came by the way of Columbia, Charlotte and Salisbury. He usually rode in his carriage but sometimes for variety he rode horesback. When he was in about six miles of Salisbury, he dismounted and went up to a substantial looking home and asked an attractive girl of fourteen if he could get a cup of coffee and some light refreshments. He knew that the day in Salisbury would be very crowded. The girl was Betsy Brandon. She replied that she was the only one at home as all the rest of the family had gone to Salisbury to see General Washington. To her great disappointment they had left her at home to keep an eye on the servants. He told her that he would make a bargain with her. If she would get him a cup of coffee, he would arrange for her to see General Washington before any of the other members of the family saw him. When the cup of coffee had been made and drunk, he arose and said: "I am General Washington." In after years, she married Col. Francis McCorkle and became the mother of several children who become prominent in the affairs of the county and the State. No wonder that her descendants loved to tell the story of Betsy Brandon and General Washington. I like to believe that she is buried in Thyatira Cemetery.

Speaking of the Brandons, the Rev. Don R. Brandon, the gifted young pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Welch, West Virginia, is a descendant of the Thyatira Brandons.

One of the most conspicuous monuments in the cemetery marks the grave of Dr. F. N. Lucky, who was a prominent physician and citizen of the Thyatira community. He was born August 12, 1823 and died August 8, 1878. His home was several miles south or southwest of the church. During the Civil War he rendered a noble service as a surgeon in the Confederate Army. As a citizen, he represented Rowan in the State Legislature.

The first time I ever saw a hearse at Thyatira or anywhere else was at Dr. Lucky's funeral. I then lacked less than two months of being ten. It was the only time I ever saw a hearse at Thyatira as long as I lived in that community. Back in those days, the casket was brought to the church in a two-horse wagon, or maybe a spring wagon, and was carried from the church to the cemetery by the pallbearers.



CHAPTER II

FROM THE DIVISION TO THE CENTENNIAL

THE DIVISION

IN THE LATTER part of Dr. McCorkle's pastorate, there occurred a distressing split in the Thyatira congregation, which resulted in the organization of Back Creek Church in 1805, and it was all brought about by a great revival of religion. In order to understand the situation, it is necessary to take a glance at the revival. The facts are found in Foote's Sketches of North Carolina, and "Revivals in America" by Dr. W. W. Sweet.

The leader in the revival was the Rev. James McGready, who was brought up under the ministry of Dr. David Caldwell in the old Buffalo Church near Greensboro. Shortly after McGready was ordained to the ministry, he visited Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia, where a revival had been going on among the students for a number of years. His heart was strangely warmed by what he saw and heard. Upon his return to North Carolina, he began to preach fervent, evangelistic sermons with great power. As a result, there were unusual revivals in Guilford, Alamance and surrounding counties. So far as I can learn, there was nothing objectionable about these revivals.

In 1796 McGready went to Kentucky. Under his preaching and that of his co-workers, there occurred the most remarkable revival meetings in the history of America. Thousands attended the meetings. People camped in tents and wagons and hastily constructed shacks. Under the power of the Gospel, people were "struck down" to the ground under deep conviction. Some lay there in a swoon; others cried for mercy; still others shouted and danced and even barked like dogs. Some were taken with a bodily exercise known as "jerks." An eye-witness estimated that as many as 3,000 were struck down in one protracted camp meeting.

Some of the Presbyterian ministers of North Carolina, when they heard of these wonderful things, went to Kentucky to see them with their

own eyes. They were deeply impressed by what they saw. Upon their return to North Carolina, they began to held meetings like those they saw in Kentucky, with much the same results. Hundreds of people were "struck down" in these meetings. Some lay in a swoon for hours; others cried out for mercy; still others were affected by a bodily exercise known as the "jerks."

Dr. McCorkle and others found it difficult to warm up to these meetings with their bodily exercises and confusion, and yet they tried to study them with open minds. With this in view, in January, 1802, Dr. McCorkle, Dr. James Hall, pastor of Bethany in Iredell, and Dr. Joseph D. Kilpatrick, pastor of Third Creek Church, went to a great revival camp meeting in Randolph County, taking with them about a hundred of their members, mostly young people. In that meeting, hundreds of people were "struck down" under deep conviction, among them a considerable number of the people who had come with the ministers from Rowan and Iredell, including Dr. McCorkle's own son.

Dr. Foote says that Drs. McCorkle, Hall and Kilpatrick "returned to their charges, satisfied that the excitement was a revival of true religion, and these bodily exercises were connected in a manner inexplicable and not to be questioned." Drs. Hall and Kilpatrick were more enthusiastic about what they saw than Dr. McCorkle was, and began to have similar meetings in their communities. Dr. McCorkle recognized that there were many true conversions in these meetings, but he could not approve of the confusion and the "bodily exercises," and he spoke against them. His congregation was divided on the subject, into "revivalists" and "anti-revivalists." Dr. McCorkle was classified as an "anti-revivalist." It was the "Old Side" and the "New Side" controversy all over again.

BACK CREEK ORGANIZED

The controversy resulted in the withdrawal from Thyatira of the "revivalists," consisting of twenty or thirty families and five elders. It is said that for quite a while this group worshipped in a barn about a mile from the present site of Back Creek Church, and then they petitioned the Presbytery to be organized into a church. This petition was granted by Concord Presbytery on September 6, 1805, but not without some censure. In the minutes of the Presbytery, we find this statement: "Moreover, Presbytery being informed that the same habits &c. on the part of the petitioners upon account of which they became originally obnoxious to the congregation of Thyatira do still exist, and that therefore it seems impossible that they can worship together in peace and harmony; Therefore, although

Presbytery views the conduct of the petitioners as disorderly in continuing so long a separate people worshipping in a public capacity without applying to Presbytery to be recognized in that condition, and also views as disorderly such as have been in the habit of ministering to them in that state; Resolved that although we deeply regret the necessity of such a measure, the prayer of the petition is hereby granted, upon the condition that the petitioners do not build their house of worship nearer than about five miles."

Dr. James Hall, pastor of Bethany, who seems to have been a peace-maker, came down from Iredell with his famous sulky, on which he had a kind of speedometer, and measured off five miles. The Back Creek people promptly built a little log church. In 1811 they built a larger one in which they continued to worship until 1857, when they erected the present substantial brick building. Time has a wonderful way of healing wounds. In less than fifty years, Thyatira and Back Creek had the same pastor, and from that day to this they have lived on the most friendly terms, as Christians should.

RECOVERING FROM THE DIVISION

The division was a severe blow to Thyatira, from which it took years to recover. To begin with, it must have broken Dr. McCorkle's heart. He was never the same again. His health began to fail and in 1806 or 1807, at the age of sixty, he had a stroke while preaching and was never able to preach again. His condition can be imagined from the following action taken by Concord Presbytery on October 5, 1807: "Whereas the reverend father and friend, Dr. Samuel E. McCorkle, is in a weak and frail state, and we think it a duty incumbent on the congregation to which he has ministered for many years, to consider his temporal circumstances and conscientiously contribute to his convenience as his necessity and their ability allow; It is therefore ordered that Reverend James McRee write a friendly letter to the congregations of Thyatira and Back Creek reminding them of their duty in this respect." Dr. McCorkle remained an invalid until his death on January 21, 1811.

Perhaps the severest part of the blow to Thyatira was to have approximately thirty families and five elders, practically all the elders there were, withdraw from its membership at one time. The elders who withdrew were: John Barr, William Bell, Thomas Gillespie, Thomas King and Abraham Lowrance. The withdrawal took away quite a number of the leaders. It also greatly reduced the attendance upon the services of the

church, and crippled the church financially, and thus reduced its ability to support a pastor. There was also a bitterness about the controversy which affected the spirituality of the church.

But those who remained girded up their minds and decided to carry on. The first thing they had to do was elect some elders. Whom they elected we do not know, but they were no doubt some of those whose names have already been mentioned in the earlier part of this history.

An even more difficult problem faced the congregation when Dr. McCorkle's health gave way. They had to find a new pastor. It was something like ten years before a permanent pastor was secured. In the meantime the church had a number of stated supplies. Dr. Alexander says that the Rev. John Brown, D.D., gave half of his time to Thyatira and the other half to Salisbury from 1807 to 1809. Dr. Rumble says that the Rev. Mr. Bowman, son-in-law of Dr. McCorkle, supplied the pulpit for some time. What other supplies the church had at this time we do not know.

The Rev. John Carrigan seems to have been the first permanent minister of Thyatira after the death of Dr. McCorkle. The minutes of Presbytery and the General Assembly give the following data about him. He was licensed by Orange Presbytery in 1794, and was one of the original members of Concord Presbytery when it was set off from Orange in 1795. From 1797 to 1807 he was pastor of Bethpage, and for a part of that time pastor of Ramah. In a letter written by Dr. McCorkle in 1802 he refers to Mr. Carrigan as "my friend and neighbor."

On April 10, 1807 Concord Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relationship between him and Bethpage. After that he was reported in the minutes as being without a charge for a number of years. He was so reported as late as 1814. His name first appears as pastor of Thyatira and Bethpage in the Assembly's Minutes for 1819. This indicates that he became pastor of Thyatira sometime between 1814 and 1819. As there are no records of Thyatira for that period we have no data concerning his ministry here, but all indications are that he had a fruitful pastorate. The minutes of Concord Presbytery for 1822 contain this paragraph: "Our dear brother, Rev. John Carrigan, departed this life on the 31st of March 1822, having ceased from his labors and gone to receive his reward and enjoy his rest."

The Rev. James Stafford was ordained and installed as pastor of Thyatira on November 15, 1823, and continued as pastor until April 8, 1831. He was evidently still a young man as he had not been ordained before. We do not know much about him but there are several items that tell us something of the character of the man and the nature of his ministry.

The Historical Society at Montreat has furnished us with an article which appeared in "The Visitor and Telegraph" on October 13, 1827, that tells of the organization of a Bible Society at Thyatira under the leadership of Mr. Stafford. The article reads thus:

"On the 22 inst., which was Saturday preceding the administration of the Lord's Supper at Thyatira, the greater part of the congregation being present, it was proposed by the Rev. James Stafford that a Congregational Bible Society be formed, as a branch of the Salisbury Bible Society.

"Rev. James Stafford was called to the chair, and a constitution was adopted, and subscribed by twenty persons. The following regular officers were chosen: Rev. James Stafford, President; Alex Lowrance and James Silliman, Vice-Presidents; and Francis Gibson, Treasurer. Managers: Jesse McNeely, George Gillespie, Jacob Skiles, John McCulloch, James Caruthers and Julian J. Reeves.

"Five members have been added, making in all twenty-five. It is clearly ascertained that there are families residing within the bounds of this congregation that are destitute of the Bible, but it is hoped that they will soon be blessed with the sacred volume, and that this fact will excite other congregations to inquire if there be not such families residing within their bounds, and to make due efforts to supply them." The article is signed by Julius J. Reeves, Recording Secretary.

Another thing that we know about the Rev. James Stafford is the fact that he decided to leave North Carolina and the South when the legislature of North Carolina passed a law forbidding anyone to teach Negro slaves how to read. At that time and up to the close of the Civil War, Thyatira Church had a considerable number of slaves who were full members of the church. Mr. Stafford was evidently deeply interested in teaching these slaves to read the Word of God. We judge that he was a man of deep convictions, or else he would not have resigned his pastorate and left the south for conscience sake. The minutes of the Presbytery show that on April 8, 1831, he was dismissed to the Presbytery of Cincinnati.

A record was kept of the children who were baptized during the pastorate of Mr. Stafford, fifty-two children in all. That is the earliest record of any kind that has been preserved in connection with the history of Thyatira. On that list is the name of James Franklin Carrigan, who was baptized on February 14, 1830, and who in after years was my Sunday School teacher. Of the fifty-two children on the list, he is the only one I ever knew personally.

For the next six years, Thyatira was served by stated supplies. The Rev. Thomas Espy, an unusually devout and able young minister, supplied Thyatira from Salisbury during the spring and summer of 1831. He too was a man of deep convictions. Before coming to Salisbury and Thyatira, he had been at Centre. There he had quite a controversy concerning the question as to what infants have a right to be baptized. The Presbyterian Confession says that only children of believers should be baptized. At least one parent must be a member of some evangelical church. But some ministers administered baptism to children whether the parents were members of the Church or not, provided they had been baptized. A great controversy had raged over this same question for years in New England. The practice of baptizing children whose parents had been baptized, but were not members of a church, was dubbed the "Half-way Covenant."

Mr. Espy stood by his convictions and refused to baptize a child unless at least one parent was a member of the Church. The controversy resulted in his leaving the Centre community and coming to Salisbury and Thyatira. By his ability, his spirituality, his deep convictions and his intense earnestness, it looked as if he were going to have a rich ministry, but in the fall of 1831 he was stricken with tuberculosis and died on April 16, 1833, and was buried in Salisbury. It is interesting to note that his daughter Harriet became the first wife of Honorable Zebulon B. Vance, the distinguished Governor of North Carolina and United States Senator.

The Rev. James Elijah Morrison was the next supply of whom we have any record. He graduated from Union Theological Seminary in 1831 and was licensed to preach in April, 1832. He evidently came to Thyatira as a licentiate as he was not ordained until September, 1834, and then he was ordained as an evangelist and not as a pastor. He left Thyatira by 1836, for we find that he was supplying Bethpage and Concord in 1836-37, and that he was called to those two churches in 1838 and remained their pastor until 1852. He lived to a ripe old age and died at Morven, North Carolina, February 18, 1892.

The Rev. Patrick Sparrow was pastor in Salisbury 1834-36, and supplied Thyatira for all or part of that time. In 1836-37 he helped to raise funds to found Davidson College, and was then elected professor, the first man ever elected a professor in Davidson College. Dr. Robert Hall Morrison had previously been elected president. After serving as professor in Davidson for two or three years, Mr. Sparrow went to Prince Edward County, Virginia, and in 1845 was elected President of Hampden-Sydney College.



FIRST MANSE, 1881
CEMETERY GATE



PRESENT MANSE, 1927
VIEW OF CEMETERY

The minutes of the General Assembly for 1837 state that the Rev. Daniel Lindley was stated supply of Thyatira at that time. He was a noted missionary to the Zulus in Africa for many years, and was probably at home on furlough. In the minutes of the 1837 Assembly, Thyatira was reported as having 200 members, and Back Creek as having 193. Those are the earliest statistics that I have been able to discover.

The Rev. James D. Hall was the next permanent pastor. A note in an old sessional record in 1840 says that he began his ministry at Thyatira in May 1836. He was a native of Iredell County and closely related to the noted Dr. James Hall, pastor of Bethany. He was a graduate of the University of North Carolina and Union Theological Seminary in Virginia.

Dr. Rumble in his semi-Centennial address at Davidson College, tells us that Mr. Hall was a member of the building committee when Davidson College was founded in 1836-37. He also tells us that people of neighboring churches took their wagons, teams and servants, camped on the newly purchased grounds for the College and spent several weeks in clearing off the grounds, building fences and in making and hauling brick. Inasmuch as their pastor was a member of the building committee, I have no doubt that the people of Thyatira had a part in this work. Mr. Hall was a trustee of Davidson College from 1845 to 1870. Dr. Rumble tells us that at the semi-Centennial celebration of the College, in 1887, Mr. Hall sat on the platform, a venerable patriarch of eighty-one with a full white beard. He was the only one of the founding fathers present at the semi-Centennial.

But he was only thirty when he became pastor of Thyatira. Previous to his coming, he had been an evangelist in Orange Presbytery for two years and had married Miss Elizabeth Scott of Rockingham County. They had an infant son, named William Thomas Hall, who was about six months old when Mr. Hall came to Thyatira, and nearly eleven years old when he left. This son became a distinguished preacher, a professor in Columbia Theological Seminary, and Moderator of the General Assembly of our Church. He was a Thyatira boy who made good. Mr. Hall's first wife died early and he married Miss Elvira Brandon of the Thyatira congregation.

His ministry at Thyatira seems to have been richly blessed. During the first year of his pastorate, sixteen persons were added to the church on profession, and the next year there were eighteen. In 1841 there were twelve, in 1842 there were twelve and in 1845 there were seventeen. The total membership of the church increased. It looked as if the church was on its way to a complete recovery from the division which occurred forty years before, and then, in September, 1846, Mr. Hall felt a call to home

mission work in Gaston County, where he spent the rest of his life and did a wonderful work. Within a year after he moved to Gaston County, his second wife, Elvira Brandon, died. In due time he married again and became the father of eight children, some of whom attained to places of distinction. One of his sons, Dr. Joseph Kirkland Hall, has been a useful minister in our Church for fifty-five years, and now (1948) resides in Belmont, Gaston County.

For eight years after Mr. Hall left, Thyatira had no regularly installed pastor and the records indicate that the membership declined. From the fall of 1846 to the spring of 1851 the Rev. Stephen Frontis served the church as stated supply. During these years he gave part of his time to other churches. He was a native of France, a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary and a man of marked ability. He was evidently an acceptable preacher and pastor, as Thyatira and Back Creek united in a call to him in April, 1851, to be their pastor. But he declined the call and went to Centre as stated supply. It is to be noted that Thyatira and Back Creek got together in this call after a separation of forty-five years.

From March, 1852 to June, 1853, the Rev. Robert Agnew, a licentiate, who had never been ordained, served as stated supply for Thyatira and Back Creek. The minutes of the General Assembly indicate that twenty-six members were added on profession while he was stated supply. He went from Thyatira to Winnsboro, South Carolina, as stated supply of that church.

We have now come to the close of the first hundred years. You will recall that the land on which the church was built was purchased on January 17, 1753. During the hundred years, the church had many ups and downs. This brief sketch of its history thus far gives us some idea of the labor, struggles and prayers of our forefathers and mothers in laying the foundations of this church upon which succeeding generations have been building.



CHAPTER III

CENTENNIAL, CIVIL WAR, RECONSTRUCTION

THE REV. SAMUEL CALDWELL ALEXANDER began his ministry at Thyatira on March 25, 1854, as stated supply. At that time he was only twenty-four years of age and had not yet been ordained, but only licensed to preach the Gospel. He was a native of Mecklenburg County and a graduate of Davidson College and Columbia Theological Seminary. It did not take the people long to decide that they wanted the young minister as their permanent pastor. A call was issued to him by Thyatira and Back Creek, and he was ordained and installed as pastor on Saturday, May 26, 1855. He was a young man of great energy and enthusiasm, and had evangelistic gifts.

His ministry was richly blessed. The minutes of the General Assembly show that an unusual number of people united with the church on profession during his ministry. In 1855 there were twenty-six, the next year thirty-eight, the next six and the next twenty-nine. Practically every time the session met a number of members were received on profession and a number by letter. There was a decided increase in the total membership of the church. It looked as if a new era was about to dawn for the church.

During Dr. Alexander's pastorate, the Centennial of the church was observed with appropriate ceremonies. To be sure, it was observed a hundred and two years after the land on which the church stands was purchased. On October 17, 1855, Dr. Alexander delivered a notable historical address as a part of the Centennial exercises. By request of the session, the address was published in pamphlet form and quite a number of copies of that pamphlet are still in existence.

About that time a new book for keeping minutes of the session was purchased. It is a stout leather-bound book, the kind that every session should have. The first thing in the book is Dr. Alexander's historical address, written in a clear, bold hand. He evidently wrote it himself. It is an

unusually eloquent address. He did not have before him all the historical records that we have today, and there are a few historical slips as to dates, but in the main it tallies with the records.

Following the historical address in the session book is this interesting paragraph in the same hand that wrote the address: "The celebration continued for eight days, during which time the gospel was faithfully preached, and the Lord saw fit to bless His Word in a most wonderful manner. Between forty and fifty persons expressed a willingness to give themselves up to Jesus Christ, to be His followers, and gave pleasing evidence of a change of heart. It was of a truth a pentecostal season. Every heart seemed to be deeply impressed with a sense of divine things. The aged fathers and mothers tell us that they have not seen such in fifty years—since the great revival of 1802."

This historical address was re-published in 1925 with a historical supplement by Dr. Thomas W. Lingle, a son of the church, thus bringing the history of Thyatira up to that date.

Dr. Alexander delivered a similar historical address at Back Creek on March 21, 1857, when the present church building at Back Creek was dedicated. At the request of the congregation, that address was also published and some of the original copies are still in existence. That address was re-published in 1905 with a supplement by Mr. John K. Goodman, bringing the history of Back Creek up to that date, which was its centennial year.

While the work of the two churches was going forward in this encouraging way, Dr. Alexander felt a call to another field, and, according to the records of the Presbytery, the pastoral relationship between him and Thyatira was dissolved on April 16, 1859. It would be interesting to trace the life of this unusual man for the next forty-eight years until his death, at Pine Bluff, Arkansas, on September 9, 1907, but that would carry us too far afield from the purpose of this history. Thyatira owes to him a great debt of gratitude for the splendid work he did while pastor here.

The Rev. Barnabas Scott Krider succeeded Dr. Alexander as pastor of Thyatira. The minutes of the session show that he began his work at Thyatira in June, 1859, but the minutes of Concord Presbytery indicate that he was not officially installed until June 9, 1860. He was a native of Rowan, a graduate of Davidson College and Columbia Theological Seminary, and a post graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary. Before coming to Thyatira at the age of thirty, he was pastor of Bethany and Tabor in Iredell County. In the meantime he had married Miss Marie P. Cowan

who made him a noble wife. She survived him nearly forty years. As a youth I saw her frequently at church, and still remember her sweet, Christian face.

Mr. Krider's first meeting with the session was on June 4, 1859, and the first persons to be received into the church that day was Mrs. Martha Jane Lingle on certificate from the old Speedwell Presbyterian Church in Rockingham County. That was my mother. The session met with regularity during his pastorate and at practically every meeting one or more members were received. His ministry was richly blessed, notwithstanding the fact that the country was in the throes of the Civil War during the larger part of the time he was pastor.

The church seems to have been in an almost constant state of revival. The minutes of the session reveal the fact that 150 persons united with Thyatira during his pastorate of a little more than six years. Of these, twenty-six were received on profession on September 3, 1865. On October 7th, Mr. Krider met with the session and seven more members were received on profession. Two weeks later, on October 20, 1865, Mr. Krider passed to his eternal reward. His son and namesake, Mr. B. Scott Krider, an elder in Thyatira, still maintains the high ideals set by his sainted father and mother.

HOUSES OF WORSHIP

Inasmuch as the present church building was completed in 1860, while Mr. Krider was pastor, it may be well to pause and talk about the several church buildings which Thyatira has had. There have been four buildings in all. A note made in the session book in 1840 says: "We now worship in the third house, two having passed away by the ravages of time." Little is known of the first two buildings. They were no doubt log buildings, located north of the present building and nearer the cemetery.

The Centennial in 1855 was held in the third building. We do not know just when it was erected, but from a reference in Dr. Alexander's historical address, we judge that it was an old building at that time. In speaking of a former elder, Thomas Cowan, who was born in 1747 and died in 1817, Dr. Alexander said: "This venerable house, now moldering with age, bears witness to his Christian zeal and energy, for he was one of the leading spirits that assisted in its erection."

The movement to erect the present church building began as early as 1856. There is an old record book which contains the names of seventy-seven persons who made subscriptions to the building fund in that year, with the amount subscribed by each one. The total amounted to \$5,627.00.

The people were probably called upon to make additional contributions later as that amount was not sufficient to build the church, which was not completed until 1860.

The following building committee was appointed: Dr. Samuel E. Kerr, Major N. F. Hall and Mr. R. H. Cowan. Although Dr. Kerr did not make a profession of his faith and unite with the church until June 15, 1861, he took the leading part in the erection of the present building. In fact, it is not too much to say that he made it possible. He lived about a mile west of Thyatira in the house that was afterwards called the McCubbins place, and later the Beeker place. From his will, which is on record in Salisbury, he appears to have been a man of large wealth, owning much land and many slaves in North Carolina, Mississippi and Tennessee. On this original subscription list, his name is down for \$2,500.00. In an article which I wrote for the Davidson Monthly in the winter of 1890, when I was a sophomore, I stated that Dr. Kerr gave \$10,000.00 for the building and left \$5,000.00 to the church in his will. I cannot recall where I got those figures but it must have been from some of the older members of the church at that time. I have recently learned from the Register's office in Salisbury that he did leave \$5,000.00 to the church in his will, so my figures of 1890 are probably correct. Tradition also says that Dr. Kerr had his slaves assist in the erection of the building. No doubt others gave just as generously according to their means as Dr. Kerr did, but I have made special mention of him because he was chairman of the building committee, took the lead and made the church building possible.

On May 26, 1860, the session passed a resolution tendering the thanks of the congregation to the building committee "for the fidelity with which they have discharged the trust committed to them, and the anxiety they have manifested to meet the wishes of the congregation." This resolution was probably passed shortly after the completion of the building.

Twenty years later, in 1879, it was discovered that the walls of the new church were spreading slightly. The foundations seemed to be weakening. A contractor was employed to strengthen the foundations. He also cemented the walls on the outside to the height of several feet, to protect them from the weather, and heavy iron rods were used to bring the walls back into place and keep them there. The cost was approximately eight hundred dollars, which was a lot of money in those days.

The church originally had on it a graceful steeple which was said to be 110 feet high. We school boys used to test our skill in trying to see who could throw a baseball over it. But in after years when the timbers began

to decay, it was thoughts advisable for the safety of the building and of the people to remove it. That was about the year 1892.

THE COLORED MEMBERS

In building the church, the plans included an ample gallery for slave members of whom there were quite a number. In 1854 the names of twenty-six were listed in the session book. From 1854 to 1865, sixty-five additional ones were received into membership and all their names are given. The last names of these ninety-one are revealing as to the extent of slavery and the ownership of slaves in the Thyatira community.

Here are the names. The numerals indicate the number of slave members who had that name: Kerr 25, Sloan 13, McConnaughey 13, Cowan 6, Graham 4, Gillespie 4, Todd 3, Gibson 3, Henderson 3, Hyde 2, Smith 2, Brown 2. The following names occur only once: Blackwell, Brandon, Boyden, Dobbins, Hall, Litaker, McNeely, Menius, Shulenbarger, and Wilhelm. Of course this table does not indicate the number of slaves any given family owned, but only those who were members of Thyatira. The table does indicate that there were only a few large slave owners in the Thyatira community. At the same time, it indicates that slavery was rather widespread.

The slaves sat in the gallery on the west side of the church. But when emancipation came with its new freedom, practically all of them ceased to attend Thyatira. However, I still remember that a few of the oldtimers sat in the colored gallery for years. I also remember how strongly I inwardly objected to sitting in that gallery on crowded occasions. It is rather tragic that those colored people were not gathered into a Presbyterian church of their own after the war. As it was, they were scattered like sheep without a shepherd. In after years the Northern Presbyterian Church established Oakland Presbyterian Church for Negroes and gathered some of them in.

RECONSTRUCTION

The Civil War and the period of reconstruction, which continued ten or twelve years after the war, dealt a severe blow to Thyatira. Quite a number of the young men of the community were killed or wounded. Everybody was impoverished. Out of a sense of patriotism, those who had means invested largely in Confederate bonds which proved to be a total loss. For example, in his will, which was made during the war, Dr. Samuel Kerr willed to two of his nieces a total of fifty thousand dollars in Confederate bonds. When his will was probated after his death, July 11, 1865, those bonds were not worth the paper they were written upon. Large investments

in slaves were a total loss. The owners of large plantations which had been worked by slave labor had nobody to work them. On top of all that came ten years of carpet-bag rule and occupation of the south by Federal soldiers.

No wonder that the people of Thyatira found it difficult to secure a pastor after the death of Mr. Krider, and even more difficult to support one. For awhile the church was served by stated supplies. The Rev. W. A. Wood, who was pastor of Third Creek, supplied the church for part time for several months. He was one of the Lord's noblemen, and was afterwards pastor of the First Church of Statesville for more than forty years.

Then the minutes of the session indicate that different ministers preached from time to time and moderated meetings of the session.

On May 4, 1867, a call was extended to the Rev. George M. Gibbs. He began his ministry at Thyatira in August, 1867, but the records indicate that he was never installed as pastor. He moderated meetings of the session in August, September and October, 1867, and then we hear no more of him. After he left, the church was supplied by visiting ministers until January, 1869.

The Rev. Samuel Caldwell Pharr, D.D., came to Thyatira as stated supply in January, 1869, was called as pastor on April 17th and installed in May, 1869. He was a native of Mecklenburg County and a graduate of Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary. Before coming to Thyatira, he had been pastor of Providence and Sharon Churches, and after that of Hopewell, all in Mecklenburg, not far from Charlotte. When he came to Thyatira, he was about forty-five years of age and had a wife and four or five children. For part of the time he was at Thyatira, he and his family lived in less than a half mile from my old home, and the Pharr children and the older Lingle children were playmates. Incidentally, I may say that in after years all those Pharr children became useful members of the Presbyterian, or Associate Reformed Presbyterian, Church in or near Charlotte.

Dr. Pharr was a man of real ability and some of the older members said that he was an unusually good preacher and pastor. He began his ministry at Thyatira with enthusiasm. On one Sunday in August, 1869, twenty-five members were received on profession and six by letter. After that the church seems to have moved on in a normal way. One or two members were received at practically every meeting of the session.

As he was pastor of both Thyatira and Franklin, his congregation covered a great deal of territory. Visiting all his people in those horse and buggy days, especially in the winter, was a very arduous task. It was said

PASTORS



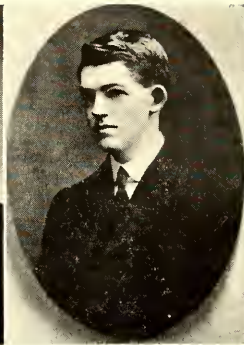
J. ALSTON RAMSEY
1877-1891



J. A. GILMER
1900-1904



W. M. WALSH
1906-1911



J. C. GRIER
1912-1916



E. D. BROWN
1916-1927



J. E. GUTHRIE
1927-1937



H. S. ROBINSON
1938-1942



JAMES R. PHIPPS
1943

that sometimes when he called at a home on a cold day, the lady of the house would prepare a toddy for him. In due time it was rumored that he liked his toddy too well. When the Presbytery heard these rumors, the congregation was directed to take a vote as to whether they wished to retain Dr. Pharr as pastor. Twenty-two voted to retain him and two voted in the negative. Many must have refrained from voting. On May 28, 1873 the Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relationship between Dr. Pharr and Thyatira. At the same time the Presbytery appointed a committee to investigate the rumors.

On June 8, 1873, in a regularly called meeting, the congregation expressed their sincere regret at losing Dr. Pharr as pastor and said, "We as a congregation bear testimony to his faithful performance of his duties as pastor in going in and out before this people."

But the matter did not end there. On July 9, 1873, the Presbytery met at Thyatira and the committee previously appointed made an elaborate report, preferring charges against Dr. Pharr. Some of the charges seem rather trivial to us now. On August 23, 1873 the Presbytery met again at Thyatira and after a long trial Dr. Pharr was suspended from the Presbyterian ministry. The next year he entered the ministry of the Methodist Church.

It was unfortunate that these meetings of the Presbytery were held at Thyatira, as the trial created a great deal of excitement and divided the congregation into two distinct groups. The whole thing was a distressing experience for the church at a time when it was trying to recover from the ravages of the Civil War, and gave the church a distinct backset.

Four years elapsed before the church secured another permanent pastor. In the meantime there was no regular stated supply. Judging from the names of the ministers who moderated the meetings of the session during this period, I get the impression that pastors of nearby churches helped Thyatira as much with preaching services and in other ways as they could. Among these were the Rev. W. W. Pharr, pastor of Centre, the Rev. A. L. Crawford, Evangelist with headquarters in Statesville, the Rev. E. A. Chandler, stated supply at Back Creek and the Rev. T. P. Penick, pastor at Mooresville.

The Rev. Kiah P. Julian gave some valuable assistance during this period. He was a native of Rowan who united with Thyatira on profession in 1868 when he was about thirteen years of age, but later took his membership to the First Presbyterian Church of Salisbury. His boyhood home was on the Salisbury road about five miles east of Thyatira. He

graduated from Davidson College in 1874, but did not enter Union Theological Seminary until the fall of 1875. It must have been during that interim that he taught school at Thyatira. He frequently conducted services on Sunday when no ordained minister was available. I remember it was said that he was not allowed to enter the pulpit as he had not been licensed, nor was he allowed to take a text or pronounce the benediction. So he stood down in front of the pulpit and talked to the people out of the Bible that was used in connection with the Sunday School. He graduated from Union Seminary in 1878, became an effective preacher and was pastor of churches in Lynchburg, Atlanta and Florida, but died at the early age of thirty-four.

Notwithstanding all the help that was given, Thyatira had a very difficult time during those four years without a pastor. Very few members were received and the total membership decreased. Not only so but it was a time of demoralization due to the war and reconstruction, and the session spent much of its time in discipline. In some cases the discipline was for gross immorality. But brighter days were ahead. In the summer of 1876, the Rev. J. Alston Ramsay, who had been licensed to preach but had one more year at seminary, was secured to supply the church during his summer vacation. The people were so charmed with him that they decided to wait for him until he graduated from seminary. So in March, 1877, the congregation called him and on May 19, 1877, he was installed pastor. In the meantime the Thyatira session approached the Back Creek session with the suggestion that they get together again. In response, Back Creek also called Mr. Ramsay. Thus began the happy relationship of the two churches having the same pastor, which continued until June, 1946, when Thyatira undertook the support of a pastor for his whole time. And thus began a new era in the history of Thyatira. Before looking into this new era, let us pause and get acquainted with the elders and deacons who guided the church through the period that we have been discussing, a period that included the troublous years of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

ELDERS

Captain John McCulloch moved from this community to Statesville at the beginning of this period, but he was evidently a very useful elder in Thyatira for many years. His name appears as one of the organizers of the Thyatira Bible Society in 1827. In 1831 he was elected clerk of the session and continued as clerk for fifteen years. The last meeting of the session that he attended was in April, 1853. Dr. S. C. Alexander, in his Centennial

Address on October 17, 1855, says that Captain McCulloch was still living in Statesville.

Alexander Lowrance was born July 15, 1778 and died October 10, 1868. He was the patriarch of the session. The biographical sketch in the minutes of the session says that he was a ruling elder in Thyatira for at least fifty-five years, the longest term of service ever given by an elder to Thyatira, so far as the records show. The minutes in the session book says: "In the discharge of his duties he was mild and pleasant, but firm and decided. He opposed everything that was wrong in doctrine or immoral or inconsistent in practice . . . Both by precept and example he encouraged the religious instruction of the young, and he lived to see the fruits of his labors in the conversion of his family. His sons were elders in the Presbyterian Church, some in this state and others in Tennessee."

Thomas Todd was born September 6, 1793 and died July 23, 1869. He was received into Thyatira by letter from Concord in April 27, 1845. He was made clerk of the session sometime prior to May 10, 1850, as he signed his name as clerk of the session on that date. However, the unsigned minutes for four or five years previous to that date appear in his handwriting, which by the way was unusually good writing. He continued as clerk of the session until 1863, and then having reached three-score and ten, he probably asked to be relieved. For more than twenty years he served the church well as a ruling elder.

James Brandon Gibson was elected an elder in 1844, and continued to serve until his death in 1885, a period of forty-one years. He lived four or five miles east of Thyatira and I recall that in my boyhood days we could see him riding to church on horseback with great regularity. As a member of the session, he always went to church well ahead of time. The minutes indicate that he attended meetings of the session with marked punctuality. He was sent even more frequently to see erring members. There was something about his manner and face that especially fitted him for that sort of a mission. He was an elderly man when I was a boy and I did not know him well, but I always felt strongly drawn toward him. So far as I can discover, there is no marker to his grave in the Thyatira Cemetery. There certainly should have been one.

John Knox Graham was born September 15, 1820 and died November 30, 1895. He attended his first meeting of the session February 19, 1855. These dates indicate that he was an elder in Thyatira for approximately forty years. The minutes show that he was clerk of the session from April 12, 1863 until his death, a period of more than thirty-two years. It is a

joy to read the minutes he recorded as they are in such a clear, beautiful hand. Although he was over seventy-five when his last minutes were written, on October 6, 1895, his hand was still steady.

Mr. Graham was a member of the first class that ever entered Davidson College, the class that graduated in 1840, and was a man of unusual intelligence. For many years he was superintendent of the Sunday School, nobody seems to know how many. He was certainly superintendent as far back as I can remember. And, by the way, it is strange what a Sunday School lad does remember. I remember how he used to go out to the front entrance of the church and ring a handbell for Sunday School and again for church service. I also remember that he opened the Sunday School practically every Sunday with the hymn "Another six days' work is done." And I remember that near the close of his prayer he generally said, "Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God alone giveth the increase."

He was well versed in the doctrines and government of the church and it has been said that he was sent to more meetings of Presbytery, Synod and the General Assembly than any other elder Thyatira ever had.

John P. Silliman was born January 17, 1818 and died July 16, 1891. The first meeting of the session he attended was February 19, 1855. From those dates it will be seen that he was an elder for more than thirty-five years. His father, James Silliman, who died in 1848, had been a member of the session for many years. Inasmuch as he married my mother's sister, I knew him as "Uncle John Silliman." I remember him as a man of deep piety, but somewhat austere. He held to high standards of Christian living, and was faithful in his attendance upon meetings of the session and in the performance of his duties as an elder.

John R. Lowrance was elected an elder at the same time as Mr. Graham and Mr. Silliman. He was the son of the venerable Alexander Lowrance. His first meeting with the session was on February 19, 1855. His name does not appear in the minutes of the session after October, 1863. His death occurred on November 15, 1866.

Major Newberry F. Hall was born April 28, 1811, and died March 3, 1889. He was received into Thyatira on certificate from Unity Church September 7, 1856. On November 10, 1860 he was ordained an elder and filled that office with faithfulness for twenty-nine years. He was a man of prominence in the county and represented Rowan in the State Legislature for a time. He represented Thyatira frequently at meetings of Presbytery and Synod. Because of his wide experience and reading, he was the most interesting conversationalist in the community. I recall how as a boy I

used to hang on his words as he talked to groups of men and boys who gathered in front of the church before service.

Henry Sechler was born January 31, 1787 and died October 2, 1875. He was received into Thyatira upon profession April 15, 1855. On May 20, 1855 his wife, four daughters and one son were received into Thyatira on certificate from Mount Zion Reformed Church. They all became valuable members of Thyatira. He was ordained an elder on November 10, 1860, at the age of seventy-three and filled that office to the end of his life. He was especially noted for his piety.

In this connection there is an item that touched me deeply. His son, John F. Sechler, before enlisting in the Confederate Army, at the age of forty, made his will on September 12, 1861. It is recorded in an old account book kept by the deacons. In the will he directed that all his property, both personal and real, be sold, that one hundred dollars be given to each of his four sisters and that the residue be placed in the hands of the deacons of Thyatira "for the cause of the promotion of true religion in that particular church." In less than a year he was dead. His gravestone says, "Died July 28, 1862 of wounds received at Malvern Hill."

Joseph Henderson was ordained an elder on July 17, 1864 and filled that office until his death on December 28, 1871. Prior to his election as an elder he was a deacon. It is interesting to note that while he was a deacon the session sent a committee to see him to urge him to refrain from erecting and operating a whiskey distillery. He finally acceded to the wishes of the session. A few years later he was elected an elder. He must have won the full confidence of the people.

Alfred F. Goodman was born May 19, 1838 and died January 19, 1916. He was elected an elder on July 30, 1876 and served in that office until his death, a total of nearly forty years. While I was still a young man, a friend, who was critical, challenged me to point out the members of Thyatira who were letting their light so shine as to cause others to glorify God. The first person I pointed to was Mr. Goodman. That shows the impression which an elder made upon at least one young person, and I am sure that all the young people of the church and the older ones too would have agreed with my estimate. Even the critic agreed with me.

By his deep piety, his irreproachable life, his faithfulness to duty, and his sense of humor, Mr. Goodman came as near being an ideal elder as any elder I have even known. The session frequently sent him on difficult missions to see wayward members. The very day he was ordained, the session appointed him a member of a committee to negotiate with Back

Creek, with a view to getting Back Creek join with Thyatira in calling a pastor. The mission was successful. His home was a Christian home. One son, J.W.M. Goodman, became a Presbyterian minister; another son, John F. Goodman, was an elder in Thyatira from 1902 to 1910 and is now an elder in the Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville, N. C.; still another son, Walter A. Goodman, is a deacon in the First Presbyterian Church of Salisbury. His only daughter, the wife of J. Samuel McCorkle, clerk of the session, has been an active and efficient worker in Thyatira for many years. The records show that Mr. Goodman frequently represented Thyatira in meetings of the Presbytery and of the Synod.

J. Samuel McCubbins was elected an elder in Thyatira on July 30, 1876, and continued to hold this office until he moved his membership to the First Church of Salisbury in 1882. He lived a mile west of the church on what was formerly known as the Kerr place, but is now known as the Beeker place. He was essentially a business man and liked to see the affairs of the church conducted in a business way. It was largely through his influence that the Rev. J. Alston Ramsay was secured as pastor of Thyatira.

The elders whose names are given above had placed upon them the responsibility of guiding the church through the difficult years of the Civil War and Reconstruction. For the most part they were years of poverty and demoralization. In reading the minutes of the session I got the impression that they did their work with wisdom and with great diligence and fidelity. All honor to their memories.

DEACONS

In his Centennial Address, Dr. Alexander had a great deal to say about the elders, but not a word about the deacons, which leaves us wondering whether Thyatira had any deacons in the early years. The first reference that I have been able to find in the minutes of the session concerning the election and ordination of deacons was in 1876. In the history of Third Creek Church, which dates back nearly as far as Thyatira, there is this statement: "No records are available of election, ordination and installation of deacons in this church prior to the year 1869."

All this is probably explained by the fact that prior to the division of the Presbyterian Church into north and south, in 1861, the undivided church placed less emphasis upon the office of deacon than our Church does now. In fact the northern branch of the Church does not even now place as much emphasis upon the deacon's office as the southern branch does. In the southern branch there are more deacons than elders. In the northern

branch there are twice as many elders as deacons. In the northern branch much of the work which we assign to deacons is assigned to the trustees.

However, there is abundant evidence that there were deacons in Thyatira Church long before 1876. The obituary notice of Joshua Miller, who died on January 21, 1877, states that he was ordained a deacon in Thyatira in 1855. Old receipts given by pastors for payments on their salaries indicate that he was treasurer of the church from 1869 to 1876. He may have been treasurer prior to 1869. In June, 1857, the session appointed him to be agent in the congregation for the North Carolina Presbyterian, then published at Fayetteville. They must have had something similar to what we call "Church Paper Week."

In his will, made in September, 1861, John F. Sechler, after making certain provisions for his sisters, willed the residue of his estate to the deacons of Thyatira.

On October 9, 1864, the session passed the following resolution: "That the deacons be requested to report to the session at the close of each year whether the pastor's salary has all been collected, and if not how much is behind and from whom."

At a meeting of the session in December, 1871, it is stated that J. F. Carrigan, a deacon, met with the session. There is no indication how long before that he had been a deacon. From 1879 to 1891 he was treasurer of the church.

And now we come to the first sessional record of the election, ordination and installation of deacons. In October, 1876, John C. Gillespie and John L. Graham were elected, ordained and installed. James B. Parker was elected at the same time but declined. In August, 1877 Wilson A. Lingle, my father, and Rufus Albright were elected, ordained and installed. This brings us to the end of one era and the beginning of another. But before passing on it may be interesting to look at the work of the deacons back in those days.

THE WORK OF THE DEACONS

Back in those days the work of the deacons consisted mainly in raising the pastor's salary and passing their hats for the collection on Sunday. In my boyhood days there were no collection plates and the deacons literally used their hats in taking up the collection. Collections were frequently taken for "contingent expenses." I did not know what that meant, but the word "contingent" rather appealed to my imagination.

Raising the pastor's salary was something else. In electing deacons,

geographical considerations cut quite a figure. It was highly desirable that there should be a deacon located in every part of the congregation. Then each deacon was assigned the families in his neighborhood and he was expected to see each family, especially the head of the family, to see how much that family would subscribe to the pastor's salary. I remember how my father, after a hard day's work on the farm, would often mount a horse in the evening and ride out among the neighbors to secure subscriptions to the salary of the pastor. Then later on, when the subscribers had sold some cotton or other farm produce, it was his duty to go out and collect the subscriptions in whole or in part. There is an old record book, covering many years, which shows what each person subscribed. The subscriptions for the most part were pitifully small. Those were hard and cruel days of poverty after the Civil War.

The deacons paid the pastor in irregular installments and then at the end of the year they would have a grand settlement. Sometimes the full amount promised the pastor was not paid even at the end of the year. The preacher must have been hard up at times. In an old record book there is a letter which one of the pastors wrote to the treasurer of the church, calling attention to the fact that two members had just sold some cotton and suggesting that it might be a good time to see them. The preacher must have been hungry when he wrote that letter. But let us remember that back in those days most of the members were hard up too. At any rate, the present plan for looking after the finances of the church is more excellent than the plan they had in those olden days.

Elders of Thyatira Presbyterian Church



Front Row: (left to right)—Rev. James R. Phipps, Harold Graham, J. S. McCorkle, (clerk)
Back Row: (left to right)—Locke Neel, James A. Sloan, Carl Hall, O. C. Shoaf, Herron
Kistler. Lower inset left: J. C. Carrigan; Lower inset right: Scott Krider.



CHAPTER IV

A NEW ERA

THE REV. J. ALSTON RAMSAY was ordained and installed as pastor of Thyatira on May 19, 1877, and continued as pastor for fourteen years. This was the longest pastorate in the history of the church, with the exception of that of Dr. Samuel E. McCorkle. With the coming of Mr. Ramsay, a new and brighter era began for Thyatira. Divisions, Civil War, Reconstruction and long periods without a pastor, all of which had disrupted the work of the church, were things of the past.

Mr. Ramsay was a native of Salisbury and a graduate of Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary. He was not quite twenty-five when he became pastor of Thyatira, but inasmuch as he wore a full beard, according to the custom of the time, he looked very much older than that to a boy of nine. My earliest recollection of him is in connection with his marriage which took place October 7, 1877. When it was noised abroad that he was going to Virginia to get his bride, the interest and curiosity of the people knew no bounds, and I, aged nine, was one of the people. He married Miss Isabella Venable McNutt of Hampden-Sydney, Virginia.

As there was no manse, Mr. Ramsay and his bride lived for a little over two years at the home of Mr. J. S. McCubbins, a mile west of the church, now known as the Beeker place. In that connection, I had one of the most embarrassing experiences of my life. At that time the Mill Bridge Post Office was kept in the home of Mr. McCubbins. The mail arrived about twice a week and I was frequently sent to get our family mail. One day I arrived while they were still sorting the mail and putting the letters into pigeon holes, and the bride was helping. They motioned to me to take a seat in a rocking chair. Directly the bride handed me a letter. I arose to get it. When I went to sit down the chair rocked out from under me and I sat down on the floor with a thud. The bride laughed. That added to my embarrassment. But I do not see how she could have helped it.

It soon became apparent to the congregation that there was urgent need for a manse and they proceeded to build one. The work began in the fall of 1879. Every man that could handle a saw and a hammer took part. By the spring of 1880 they had a comfortable two-story manse ready for occupancy. I helped to haul the rocks that were used for walling the well, and thus had a small part in it. I still remember how cold those stones were as I picked them up in the fields on a frosty morning and tossed them into the wagon. That manse was displaced by a new and better one in 1927.

It was not long until the older people were saying that Mr. Ramsay was the best preacher in the Presbytery. I heard them say it frequently. But his sermons were a bit too abstract and theological, at least for one small boy. No doubt the resolutions passed by the congregation at the close of his pastorate at Thyatira give a just appraisal of him and his ministry when they say: "Whose ability as a preacher is far above the average; whose faithfulness and Christian zeal is unsurpassed; whose soundness of faith and doctrine is indisputable; and who by the blamelessness of his life and the kind and sympathetic character of his pastoral work has made for himself a place in the affections of all Christian people." That is high praise from a congregation of Scotch-Irish people, who are not given to overstatements.

There were no great revivals at Thyatira during his pastorate. He was a teaching preacher rather than an evangelist. But the annual reports to Presbytery indicate that there was a steady growth. One hundred and five persons were received into Thyatira on profession during his pastorate. The total membership grew from 126 to 202. The Sunday School grew from 70 to 155. His special mission seems to have been to unify, organize and instruct.

One of the finest things done during his pastorate was the establishment of a Christian classical school, somewhat after the pattern of Dr. McCorkle's Zion-Parnassus. Previous attempts had been made to establish such a school but had not succeeded. For example, Stephen Frontis, Jr., no doubt the son of the minister by that name, started the "Thyatira High School" immediately after the Civil War. There is in my possession an elaborate report sheet, dated October 27, 1865, showing the grades of John M. Cowan. This sheet indicates that the school offered twenty-five different courses, including Latin, Greek, French, Algebra, Geometry and History. When the school began and when it was discontinued we do not know.

The classical school that was started during Mr. Ramsay's pastorate fared better than that. A two-story frame building which is still standing

was erected about thirty yards from the southwest corner of the church during the spring and summer of 1884. I remember that my father was greatly interested in that school and served as chairman of the building committee. Mr. John N. Correll, a native of the Prospect Community, was secured as teacher, and the school opened in August, 1884. I recall that I was put to studying Latin, Greek and Algebra during the very first term. As I had never seen a book on any of the subjects before, I had plenty to occupy my time and attention. Here in my library is Goodwin's Greek Reader bearing my name and this inscription: "Bought at Thyatira December 19, 1885."

Mr. Correll proved to be an inspirational teacher. There was something about him that made a boy want to study. He was a very fine Christian character and meant even more to me by what he was than by what he taught. His work in the church was also very helpful. Among other things he organized a weekly prayer meeting for boys and men in which some of us learned to lead in prayer for the first time in our lives. In the summer of 1889 Mr. Correll moved to Taylorsville, N. C., where he taught for a number of years, and then moved to Texas, where he did notable work in the field of education.

From the fall of 1889 to the spring of 1891 Mr. R.E.C. Lawson, who had studied at Davidson College for three years, taught the classical school at Thyatira. During that time he studied theology privately under Mr. Ramsay, and a year or two later married Miss Margaret McNutt, Mrs. Ramsay's sister. After attending Union Theological Seminary for the session of 1891-92 Mr. Lawson became a very useful minister.

In June 1891 Mr. Ramsay accepted a call to Hickory, North Carolina. About that time a public school was started at Mill Bridge. As a result of this combination of circumstances the classical school at Thyatira was closed. But, like Zion-Parnassus of old it did a great work while it lasted, and meant a great deal to the church and the community. Quite a number of its students went into the ministry, and other forms of Christian service.

Mr. Ramsay took a very active part in the work of the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. He was stated clerk of the Synod of North Carolina from 1886 to 1899. In 1890 Concord Presbytery employed him to make a copy of all the old minutes of Presbytery, make an index to them and put them in form for permanent use. This he did in his clear, legible hand. The minutes thus copied, covering the period from 1795 to 1892, make eight or ten large leather-bound volumes, and are now stored in the fire-proof vaults of the Presbyterian Historical Society at Montreat, N. C. In

recognition of his ability and distinguished service, the Presbyterian College of South Carolina in 1897 bestowed upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. After a successful pastorate of about nine years in Hickory, Dr. Ramsay died there on January 11, 1900. His son, Julius McNutt Ramsay, the only member of the family living, is now an elder in the Presbyterian Church of Valdese, N. C.

The Rev. John A. Harris began his ministry at Thyatira as stated supply the first Sunday in July, 1891. A little later the congregation called him and on the first Sunday in January he was ordained and installed pastor, and continued as pastor until the middle of October, 1898. He was a graduate of Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary. His grades at Davidson College indicate that he was a man of real ability. At the same time he was a very humble man.

Mr. Harris wanted to go to Africa as a missionary, but for some reason the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions did not appoint him. It may be because he was regarded as somewhat eccentric. However, he always had the missionary spirit in his pastoral work. He especially enjoyed visiting in the homes of the lowly. Not only so, but he was always on the look-out for points where a Sunday School or church might be established. For a number of years he held services at China Grove, in addition to his labors as pastor of Thyatira and Back Creek. As a result a Presbyterian Church was organized at China Grove, which in 1898 reported a membership of about fifty, with one hundred and fifteen pupils in the Sunday School. But as most of the members moved away, the church at China Grove was discontinued after ten or twelve years. It has in recent years been resuscitated.

Mr. Harris was a good preacher and a good pastor. Inasmuch as he was not married, he devoted more than his usual amount of time to his pastoral work. The church moved along in a normal way during his ministry. A total of more than fifty members were received on profession while he was pastor. When he left, Thyatira had a total membership of 175, with 120 pupils in the Sunday School. After leaving Thyatira, he went into home mission work in the heart of the mountains of North Carolina, where he did a noble work until his death on November 8, 1924. A note in the Presbyterian Ministers Directory says: "Prevented from going to Africa as a foreign missionary, Mr. Harris bequeathed his life savings of more than \$20,000.00 to work in Africa." He being dead yet speaketh.

A little more than a year and a half elapsed before a permanent pastor was secured. During that period the Rev. George L. Cook and the Rev. John W. Lafferty served the church well as stated supplies.

The Rev. John A. Gilmer was ordained and installed as pastor of Thyatira in July, 1900 and continued as pastor until October, 1904. After graduating from Davidson College in 1880 he taught school for nineteen years. In the meantime he studied theology privately. After that he took a year at Union Theological Seminary and entered the ministry. So he was a mature man when he came to Thyatira. In July, 1884 he married Miss Lottie Avery of Morganton, who was of great help to him in the work of the church.

As a man of forty-three when he became pastor, Mr. Gilmer appealed especially to the older people, both in his preaching and in his pastoral work. He was a good, solid preacher and a sympathetic pastor. Mrs. Gilmer made a strong appeal to the women of the church and helped them to organize for service as we shall see later. The church prospered during the four years of their stay. There was one gracious revival, in which Dr. A. R. Shaw did the preachings. That year there were twenty-nine added to the church on profession. During his pastorate, a total of fifty-six were added on profession. At the close of his pastorate, Thyatira reported a membership of two hundred and eight, with one hundred and twenty-five pupils in the Sunday School. From Thyatira Mr. and Mrs. Gilmer went to Newton and later to Mt. Airy, N. C. He passed to his reward on October 20, 1913.

The Rev. J. B. Branch, a licentiate, served Thyatira as stated supply after Mr. Gilmer left. The people liked him so well that they called him, but instead of remaining with Thyatira, he felt impelled to take a post-graduate course in Princeton Theological Seminary. After that he had a useful ministry until his death on July 8, 1931.

The Rev. Walter M. Walsh was installed as pastor of Thyatira in the spring of 1906 and continued as pastor until January 3, 1911. He was a graduate of Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary, and had served a group of churches in Mecklenburg Presbytery before coming to Thyatira. Mr. Walsh was noted for his piety and my first thought of him is that he is a Christian. He was a good preacher and a sympathetic pastor. During his pastorate, my mother and two sisters died. I remember what a good pastor he was to them and how sympathetic he was with those who sorrowed. More than forty members were received into the Church on profession during his pastorate. The year he left, the church reported a membership of two hundred and the Sunday School enrollment was one hundred and ninety. The minutes of the session indicate that during this period, many families were moving from the country to nearby towns

and were asking for their church letters. Since leaving Thyatira, Mr. Walsh has had a very fruitful ministry as pastor of other churches. At this writing (1948), he is pastor at Morven, N. C.

During the year or more that elapsed before another pastor was secured, the church was served by stated supplies. Among them was the Rev. J. A. McQueen who has been professor of Bible in Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri for the past twenty years.

The Rev. J. C. Grier was elected pastor on June 1, 1912, was ordained and installed September 12, 1912, and continued as pastor until April 31, 1916. He was a graduate of Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary, and was not yet twenty-five years of age when called. He was unmarried and remained unmarried until after he left Thyatira. The statistics indicate that the church made good progress during his pastorate. Between thirty-five and forty members were received on profession. The total membership when he left was two hundred and two, and the Sunday School enrollment was two hundred and seventeen. For the past twenty years he has been pastor of Mulberry Church in Mecklenburg Presbytery, where his ministry has been blessed.

The Rev. Edward Douglas Brown began his ministry at Thyatira on October 1, 1916, and continued as pastor until February 1, 1927. He was a native of Steele Creek congregation near Charlotte and a graduate of Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary. He was forty-seven years of age and had held several pastorates before coming to Thyatira. He had also married Miss Frances D. Payne of Kinston, N. C., who was an active church worker both in the local church and in the Presbytery. Dr. and Mrs. Brown seem to have fit perfectly into the Thyatira situation. Over ninety members were received into the church on profession during his pastorate. When he left, the total membership of the church was two hundred and thirty-five and the Sunday School enrollment was two hundred and seventy-five. Probably for the first time in its history, Thyatira had a preaching service every Sunday during the larger part of Dr. Brown's pastorate. This was made possible by the automobile and good roads, which enabled the pastor to preach at Thyatira in the morning and Back Creek in the afternoon, or at Back Creek in the morning and Thyatira in the afternoon. This arrangement gave Thyatira morning services on the first, third and fifth Sundays and afternoon services on the other two Sundays.

Dr. Brown took an active part in the work of the Presbytery, the synod and the church at large. From 1914 to 1941 he was stated clerk of Concord Presbytery. In 1922 he was elected Moderator of the Synod of North

Carolina. From 1913 to 1944 he was a trustee of Davidson College. From 1924 to 1942 he was a trustee of Union Theological Seminary. For a number of years he was a trustee of Lees-McRae College at Banner Elk, N. C. He also served on numerous committees of the Presbytery and Synod. In recognition of his ability and distinguished service, Davidson College in 1922 conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

After leaving Thyatira, Dr. Brown had a fruitful ministry as pastor of several churches in Iredell County. He was called to his eternal reward on January 12, 1946.

The Rev. J. E. Guthrie began his ministry at Thyatira on May 1, 1927 and continued as pastor until August 10, 1937. He was a graduate of Hampden-Sydney College and Union Theological Seminary. At the time of his coming to Thyatira, he was forty-two years of age and had had considerable experience in the ministry. He was a very good preacher and a faithful pastor. The records show that seventy persons were added to the church on profession during his pastorate. At the close of his pastorate, the church had two hundred and eighty members and a Sunday School enrollment of two hundred and forty-five.

From the records and from my own personal observation, I have the impression that he had two special interests. He was deeply interested in the young people and in the improvement of church property. Before he had been at Thyatira a month he asked the session to authorize him to organize the young people. He showed his interest in the young people by taking groups of them on interesting trips. I ran across him and a large group of boys in Winston-Salem on one occasion. He was showing the boys the industrial plants, the banks, the newspaper offices and other points of interest in Winston-Salem. On another occasion I had a letter from him asking if I could arrange for a group of boys to get tickets to a football game at Davidson College without too great a cost. I was able to arrange it without any cost. The boys came and had a good time.

Speaking of church improvements, he had been at Thyatira less than two months when a movement was started to build a new manse. It was completed and ready to occupy by December, 1927. He next began to talk about electric lights for the church. In due time they were installed but I do not know the date. In 1931 a committee was appointed to look after the improvement of the church grounds and better care of the cemetery. The old iron cemetery gate, which had been loaned to Dr. Frazer Hood of Davidson College, was brought back and placed again at the entrance of the cemetery, between two substantial stone pillars. It is said that the

gate was made by hand by Mr. Billy Cooper, about the year 1825. His shop was near the present site of Concordia Lutheran Church. The gate has quite an interesting history, which is told more fully in Dr. Thomas W. Lingle's History of Thyatira. Provision was also made for better care of the cemetery.

Since leaving Thyatira, Mr. Guthrie has had a useful ministry and is now (1948) pastor of a group of churches in Virginia, with his home at Phenix. In all his work as a minister, Mrs. Guthrie has been a devoted helpmeet.

From August, 1937 to June, 1938, Dr. W. S. Wilson, whose home was at Davidson College, served the church as stated supply. He was a retired minister of large experience and was greatly beloved by the church.

The Rev. Henry S. Robinson began his ministry at Thyatira on June 1, 1938. However, he was not installed until August 21, 1938. He continued as pastor until October 31, 1942. He was a graduate of Davidson College and Columbia Theological Seminary, and was twenty-eight years of age when he became pastor of Thyatira. His grades at Davidson College indicate that he was a man of real ability. His preaching was above the average and he was diligent as a pastor. During his short pastorate more than thirty members were received upon profession. At the close of his pastorate, Thyatira reported two hundred and seventy-three members with a Sunday School enrollment of two hundred and thirty-four.

During his pastorate, the interior of the church was given a thorough overhauling at a cost of approximately twelve hundred dollars, and thereby greatly improved. During his pastorate, on November 18, 1940, a committee was appointed to study plans and start a movement for a new Sunday School building, a need that had been felt for a long time. As far back as 1920 a committee was appointed to study the possibility of converting the galleries into Sunday School classrooms. The committee on the new Sunday School building is still at work and a handsome sum has been raised for that purpose. The building would have probably been erected by this time if the cost of living and building had not gone so alarmingly high.

Upon leaving Thyatira, Mr. Robinson took a charge in Mississippi, but he has since returned to North Carolina and is now pastor of Mallard Creek Church near Charlotte.

The Rev. James R. Phipps, the present pastor, began his ministry at Thyatira February 1, 1943. He is an alumnus of Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary. He had had more than fifteen years of experience as preacher and pastor before coming to Thyatira. The church

Deacons of Thyatira Presbyterian Church



Front Row: (left to right)—J. E. Deal, Owen Harrison, Emory Graham.
Back Row: (left to right)—Lee Goodnight, James Baker, S. D. Corriher, J. B. Caldwell, Jr., Grady Hall, Kenneth Shoaf, R. L. Steele. *Lower inset left:* George F. Houck; *Lower inset right:* John Wilson.

has prospered under his ministry. His wife, who was a student at the General Assembly's Training School in Richmond, has been a true helpmeet not only in the home but in the work of the church. There could be no finer testimony of Mr. Phipps' ministry than the fact that Thyatira called him for his full time, beginning June 1, 1946. So far as we know, this is the first time in its history that Thyatira has ever had a pastor for his whole time. At a congregational meeting on April 18, 1948 plans for the new Sunday School building were approved and the building committee was authorized to proceed with its erection as soon as the way is clear. The cornerstone was laid with appropriate exercises on November 14, 1948. This building will mean much to the church and the community for many years to come.

THE ELDERS OF THIS PERIOD

Hugh W. Silliman was born February 13, 1860, was ordained an elder December 20, 1885 and died March 26, 1935. The records indicate that he was faithful in his performance of his duties as an elder during this long term of service. His father and grandfather had been elders in Thyatira.

Columbus C. Miller was ordained an elder on December 20, 1885 and filled the office with diligence until he moved to Mooresville and took his membership with him on August 12, 1899.

James W. Sloan was born July 11, 1860, elected an elder on March 1, 1891 and died on February 19, 1935. He served as temporary clerk of the session from December, 1895 to April, 1897. In May, 1903 he became permanent clerk of the session and filled that office with great faithfulness until April, 1935. He was also active in the work of the Sunday School.

James Franklin Carrigan was born December 3, 1829 and died June 17, 1904. He and Dr. Samuel Kerr were elected elders in 1864, but both declined. Sometime after that, Mr. Carrigan was made a deacon. In the minutes of the session in 1871, he is referred to as a deacon. He remained a deacon for at least twenty-one years and served as treasurer of the church from 1879 to 1892. On April 3, 1892 he was again elected to the eldership and served until his death. He was the clerk of the session from 1897 to 1903. In addition to these services to the church, he taught a Sunday School class of boys and young men for years. I was a member of his class and remember him with affection. A personal experience will indicate the interest that he took in the members of his class. When I started to college, Mr. Carrigan, knowing that my father was dead and that I had very little

money, called me aside and told me that if I needed money at any time I could borrow it from him without security. I availed myself of that offer on several occasions. The phrase "without security" meant as much to me as the money. It meant that he believed in me and trusted me, and that is worth a great deal to a boy.

E. Scott Miller was ordained an elder on December 7, 1902, and filled that office faithfully until he moved his membership to the First Church of Salisbury on March 31, 1929. For a number of years he was assistant choir leader and after that the leader. He was elected assistant superintendent of the Sunday School in 1898. From 1918 to 1926 he was superintendent. After moving to Salisbury he was made an elder in the First Presbyterian Church and filled that position until his death on February 6, 1941.

John F. Goodman was ordained an elder December 7, 1902. He was dismissed by letter to Spencer on March 1, 1910. Later he moved his membership to the First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville, N. C., where he has been an elder for many years. "He is one of the godliest men I know." This his pastor recently wrote me.

Joseph F. Turner was born on February 22, 1868, was ordained an elder June 19, 1910, and died September 15, 1939. The minutes indicate that he was a faithful elder for twenty-nine years, attending meetings of the session with great regularity and frequently representing Thyatira at meetings of Concord Presbytery.

J. Samuel McCorkle was ordained an elder on June 19, 1910, and is now the senior member of the session. He has been clerk of the session since April 1, 1935. Mr. McCorkle is the great-great-grandson of Dr. Samuel E. McCorkle.

J. S. Harrison was elected an elder on October 31, 1926 and filled that office with great faithfulness until his death February 6, 1945. He frequently represented the church at meetings of Concord Presbytery. Through the years he served the church in various capacities. For example, in 1917 he was elected treasurer of the benevolent causes of the church and filled that position for many years.

Mr. J. Chalmers Carrigan, who had served as a deacon for forty-four years, and as treasurer of the church for many of those years, was elected an elder on March 15, 1936, and filled that office with devotion until his death on April 12, 1948. He thus served the church in an official capacity for more than fifty-six years. In his will he left to Thyatira securities which were valued at more than two thousand and five hundred dollars.

Elders who are serving at present (1948) with the dates of their election or ordination:

J. Samuel McCorkle	June 19, 1910
O. C. Shoaf	November 14, 1936
B. S. Krider	June 30, 1929
C. W. Hall	June 30, 1929
James A. Sloan	March 15, 1936
C. L. Neel, Jr.	July 21, 1940
W. Herron Kistler	March 23, 1947
J. Harold Graham	March 23, 1947

DEACONS

Below is a list of all the deacons in the history of Thyatira whose names have been recorded, with the years they served. No doubt there were a number of other deacons in the past but there is no record of their names.

Joshua Miller	1855 - 1877
Joseph Henderson	- 1864
J. F. Carrigan	1871 - 1892
John C. Gillespie	1876 -
John L. Graham	1876 - 1891
Wilson A. Lingle	1877 - 1886
Rufus Albright	1877 - 1887
Columbus A. Sloop	1882 - 1929
Samuel F. Baker	1886 - 1938
J. W. Goodman	1888 - 1898
J. Chalmers Carrigan	1892 - 1936
Henry N. Goodnight	1892 - 1907
Joseph S. Hall	1902 - 1935
John L. Patterson	- 1916
Robert L. Albright	1917 - 1944
Robert L. Steele	1929 - 1948

If space permitted I would like to pay tribute to each of the individuals mentioned above. A number of them served the church for many years. All of them served well. As already noted, Joshua Miller was treasurer of the church from 1869 to 1876. J. F. Carrigan was treasurer from 1879 to 1892. In 1892 he was succeeded as treasurer by his son, J. Chalmers Carrigan.

Samuel F. Baker was a deacon for fifty-two years, the longest any deacon ever served in the history of the church. For much of that time he was treasurer. Mr. Joseph S. Hall was elected to the eldership in 1891 but declined, but accepted the office of deacon eleven years later.

DEACONS TODAY (1948)

G. F. Houck	ordained December 8, 1902
Jacob E. Deal	elected October 3, 1908
J. W. Wilson	ordained June 30, 1929
E. K. Graham	ordained March 15, 1936
S. D. Corriher	ordained March 15, 1936
J. O. Harrison	ordained March 15, 1936
James S. Baker	ordained July 21, 1940
Kenneth Shoaf	ordained July 21, 1940
F. Grady Hall	ordained March 23, 1947
G. Lee Goodnight	ordained March 23, 1947
J. B. Caldwell, Jr.	ordained March 23, 1947

THE SESSION

As one reads the minutes of the session from the beginning, he gets the impression that the members of the session have been very faithful in the performance of their duties. As a rule the session has always met regularly and its members have been punctual in attendance. The session has always been faithful in appointing representatives to the presbytery and to the synod, and in requiring reports from them upon their return.

The session has also performed its duty as the governing body of the church. All departments of the church have been under the control of the session—the Sunday School, the various societies, the music, and all. Reports have also been required from the deacons of the church. In the exercise of this authority, the session does not seem to have been unreasonable, or to have attempted in any way to lord it over God's heritage.

The Apostle Paul exhorted the elders of Ephesus "to take heed to the flock." This the elders of Thyatira in the past have done faithfully. I was especially impressed by this fact in reading over the minutes. If a member seemed to go astray, the session sent a committee to see him, talk with him and pray with him. If it became known that a member used profanity, a committee was sent to see him. More than one committee was sent to see members who indulged too freely in intoxicants. A committee was sent to see a deacon who was planning to erect a whiskey distillery. At

first he intimated that it was none of their business. Another committee was sent to request him to appear before the session. He sent back word that he was going out of the business. A few years later he was elected an elder. These visits from members of the session must have done him a great deal of good.

I was especially struck by the fact that the session again and again sent committees to see members who had been absent from the church services for a considerable time. The excuses these members gave sound very modern. One excuse was rather unique. The member said that when his wife died, he could not bear to go to church without her. Then he married again and his second wife did not want to go to church, so he did not go. The visits of these committees to absent members usually produced good results.

This paragraph would not be complete without reference to the old session house which was still in use when I united with the church in 1883. It was built of hewn logs and was located fifty or seventy-five yards from the northwest corner of the church. It was probably built when the second or third church building was erected. A great many members were received into the church in that old session house. I wish that it could have been preserved as a memorial of the past.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

It is not known when the Sunday School first began at Thyatira. Dr. McCorkle had a Sunday School back in his day, as reference to the early part of this history will show. In the Life of John Barr, written by his grandson in 1850, we find this statement: "The Sabbath School had his instructions as a stated teacher of a class composed of young men of colour, until his last sickness." John Barr died in 1831. The Sunday School referred to was probably at Back Creek where John Barr took his membership in 1805. But if Back Creek had a Sunday School prior to 1831, Thyatira probably had one also, but there are no early records.

The first references to the Sunday School in the minutes of the session occur when Mr. John K. Graham was superintendent. He was made an elder in 1855 and probably took charge of the Sunday School shortly after that, and continued as superintendent until his death in November, 1895. After his death, Mr. J. F. Carrigan seems to have served as superintendent for several years, though there is no record of the fact. In May, 1898, Mr. A. F. Goodman was elected superintendent and Mr. E. Scott Miller was elected assistant superintendent. Sometime before the death of Mr. Good-

man, which occurred in January, 1916, Mr. Miller was elected superintendent, but the date of his election is not clear. In February, 1916, Mr. Miller was re-elected and Mr. J. W. Sloan was made assistant superintendent. In January, 1926 Mr. Miller resigned and Mr. James A. Sloan was elected superintendent and has continued to fill that office to this time (1948).

The names of the other officers and teachers in the Sunday School have not been recorded in the records of the church, but I feel sure that they have been recorded in heaven. Their names would make a long and goodly list. Many of them served with devotion for years.

The Sunday School endeavors to follow the program mapped out by the agencies of our General Assembly. The literature prepared by our Church is used for lesson helps. From the beginning the work of the Sunday School has been hampered by lack of individual classrooms. Notwithstanding this handicap, it has done good work and continues to make progress. At present the average attendance is approximately two hundred and the enrollment is considerably larger. Everybody is looking forward eagerly to the day when the Sunday School can have a building of its own, and everybody seems to be working to that end.

THE WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

Women have always been devoted workers in the church. It has been said that they were the last at the cross and the first at the tomb. Some of the best helpers that the Apostle Paul had in his great work were women. Soon after the Southern Presbyterian Church was organized in 1861, women began to organize for service.

No doubt women were earnest workers in Thyatira from its very beginning, but there is no record of any organization among the women until about 1878. The first society had its beginning about that time. The circumstances were unique. Robbers broke into the church and carried away practically everything that could be moved. Among the things carried away were carpets, curtains, the water pitcher, the silver baptismal bowl and, if my memory serves, the Communion set. I remember how horrified we were. The text in Malachi kept coming to us: "Will a man rob God?"

Some of the stolen articles were recovered but not all. Money had to be raised to replace the missing ones, and money was scarce in those days. Mrs. Ramsay, the minister's bride, about whom I have written, invited some of the women to the home of Mr. J. S. McCubbins, where she was boarding, and they planned for a "Festival" at which they served food at so much per

plate, and thus cleared some money. That was the beginning of the Ladies Aid Society.

The Auxiliary historians say that the next society organized was "The Ladies Missionary Society," which was organized by Miss Bina Lingle about 1892. The members of this Society studied missions and contributed to both home and foreign missions.

In 1906 "The Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Union of Concord Presbytery" was formed; and an invitation was extended to the women of Thyatira to join the union. Thyatira being a bit conservative, they were rather slow about accepting the invitation. But in 1910 Miss Maggie Parker attended the meeting of the union. At that time the Thyatira Missionary Society reported forty-five members and contributions totaling \$72.40. From that time to this, Thyatira has sent delegates to the Presbyterial.

In 1912 the General Assembly of our Church approved of a church-wide organization of women to be known as "The Woman's Auxiliary." By this plan all the societies in the local church were to be brought together into one society known as the Auxiliary. The local Auxiliary in turn was to be divided into circles. Again the women of Thyatira were rather cautious about adopting this new plan. But under the leadership of Mrs. E. D. Brown, the wife of the minister who came to Thyatira in 1916, the women of Thyatira adopted the Auxiliary plan in 1920. Mrs. Brown was a gifted, consecrated woman, and did much in the way of organizing and inspiring the women of the church for a larger service. Her name will always be held in affectionate remembrance.

The Thyatira Auxiliary tries to follow the yearly program prepared by the General Assembly's Committee on Woman's Work, with offices in Atlanta. A few variations have to be made because of local conditions, the weather and roads. The Thyatira Auxiliary has a membership of approximately a hundred. The members are divided into six circles, with sixteen or eighteen members each. The circles meet once a month and then the entire Auxiliary meets on the third Sunday evening of each month. These meetings are devoted to study, to prayer and to planning for work which the Auxiliary should do.

In addition to making liberal contributions to all the causes of the Church, the Auxiliary does a great deal in the way of practical service. For example, it clothes a boy at Barium Springs Orphanage each year and makes numerous other practical contributions to the orphanage. The Auxiliary also keeps an eye on the manse and adds to its conveniences and comfort

from time to time. At this time, it is taking especial interest in helping to raise funds for the erection of the new Sunday School building.

The Auxiliary sends delegates to the Woman's Conference at Montreat each year and helps to pay their expenses, and also helps to pay the expenses of Negro delegates to the Negro Woman's Conference in Winston-Salem each year. The members of the Auxiliary entertain the young people who go away to school or college at a going-away party each fall. These are only some of the numerous things that the women of Thyatira have done and are doing.

Like other auxiliaries all over the Church, the Thyatira Auxiliary has its historians who keep the history of the Auxiliary up to date. As this history is written, the manuscript is deposited with the Presbyterian Historical Foundation at Montreat. I have drawn freely upon those manuscripts for the data given above. I have used manuscripts prepared by Mrs. J. S. Harrison, Mrs. Grady Hall, Mrs. Carl Hall, to all of whom I am deeply grateful. My only regret is that space does not allow us to publish those manuscripts in full in this history.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Thyatira seems to have realized long ago that the Church of the future depends upon the young people of the present. Provision for the instruction of the young in the Sunday School was made many years ago. Not only so, but for many years the young people have been organized into societies for study, for worship and for service.

As already noted, as far back as 1884, Mr. J. N. Correll organized the boys and young men of the church into what was known as "The Young Men's Prayer Meeting." This group met every Sunday afternoon for study, prayer and worship. This organization continued to function for a number of years.

About the year 1900, Mrs. John A. Gilmer, the pastor's wife, organized the girls of the church into a group for the study of the Bible and the causes of the Church, especially foreign missions, and for prayer. The group met once a month at the manse.

In 1909, Miss Emma Erwin organized a band of "Miriams," composed of younger girls. They sent contributions to the orphanage and made quilts for the orphans. They also made scrapbooks for Miss Ella Graham to be used in her work among the Koreans. In 1915 Mrs. O. O. Harrison organized "The Girls' Mission Band." There is no record as to how long each one of these societies continued to function.

SONS OF THE CHURCH



First Row: (left to right)—William H. Lingle, Walter L. Lingle, Thomas W. Lingle, J. William Goodman.

Second Row—J. G. Varner, James Floyd Menius, Frank Fisher Baker, Daniel T. Caldwell

Third Row—Ernest G. Clary, Payne Brown, Samuel M. Houck, G. Foyle Houck, Clyde R. McCubbins.

In 1930 "The Young People's League" was organized by the Rev. and Mrs. J. E. Guthrie. This organization included both boys and girls. There were regular meetings of the League for study and worship. In recent years the League has been superseded by "The Presbyterian Youth Fellowship" group, which is organized according to the plan mapped out by the General Assembly of our Church. In fact, practically all the organizations named above were modeled after plans suggested by our General Assembly. This Fellowship group meets twice a month for study and worship. It seems to be very much alive.

CHURCH MUSIC

For the first fifty years or more, the Thyatira Church congregation sang psalms only, using Rouse's version. That was the practice of all American Presbyterian Churches in that era, and any deviation from the practice was considered rank heresy. Rouse's version was authorized by the Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1646. Isaac Watts, the great hymn writer, did not like this version and proceeded to prepare a metrical version of the Psalms of David, which was a great improvement over Rouse's version. About 1802 there was a split in the Providence Presbyterian Church, near Charlotte, not as to whether they would sing Psalms or hymns, but whether they would use Rouse's version or Watt's version. That was a subject of controversy in many churches.

I do not know when our church began to sing hymns. As late as 1830 there was published an authorized edition of metrical psalms by order of the Presbyterian General Assembly. It is very probable that Thyatira was singing psalms only at that time. The hymn book that was used when I was a boy consisted of two parts. In the first part there was a metrical version of the 150 psalms. In the latter part of the book there were 852 hymns. The book was called "Psalms and Hymns." Most of the psalms were by Isaac Watts. There were a few by Rouse. The minister frequently gave out a psalm.

When I was a boy they had a singing school at Thyatira for several weeks nearly every summer. Mr. Collins and Mr. Freeman, both of Steele Creek, taught these schools. They taught us to read music, carry tunes and sing hymns. They also taught us some great anthems. For a long time the choir sat in front of the pulpit by order of the session. The session also elected a chorister, or precentor. The minutes of the session indicate that Mr. Samuel A. Carrigan was the first one to fill this position. After some years he was succeeded by Mr. E. Scott Miller. Before the introduc-

tion of an organ, the precentor used a tuning fork to help him to get the right key or pitch. I still have in my possession one of those old-fashioned tuning forks. The first organ was introduced about 1887. So far as I recall there was no controversy over the introduction of instrumental music as was the case in many churches. At first it was somewhat of a problem to get a regular organist. The following persons helped with the organ for the first dozen years or more: Mrs. Kate Lingle Sloan, Mrs. Nannie Lingle Russell, Miss Fannie Sloan and Miss Effie Kilpatrick.

In January, 1901, the session elected Miss Nannie Sloop (Mrs. O. O. Harrison) as organist, and Miss Laura Goodman (Mrs. J. S. McCorkle) assistant organist. Mrs. Harrison resigned in June, 1911, and Mrs. McCorkle in April, 1913.

Miss Lillian Sloop was elected organist in June, 1911, but there is no record as to how long she served. She was succeeded by Miss Angie Silliman who served for quite a number of years, but the records do not indicate for how long. Miss Isabel Sloop seems to have succeeded Miss Silliman, but the records do not say when she was elected, but the record does say that she resigned as organist April 7, 1936. Miss Ruby Wilson was elected in May, 1936. She was succeeded by Miss Nan Patterson Turner (Mrs. M. B. Corriher).

All these deserve the gratitude of the church for the faithfulness with which they served. It will be noted that some served for a good many years.

COMMUNION MEETINGS

Nothing stands out more vividly in my memory than the communion meetings that were regularly held on the first Sunday in May and the first Sunday in October in my boyhood days. Each meeting continued for three days. As a rule a visiting minister did the preaching. There was always a service on Friday at eleven o'clock. On Saturday there were two services, with a picnic dinner on the grounds between the services. Then on Sunday morning there was a solemn sermon followed by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It was during these meetings that the young people were expected to unite with the church, and the sermons kept that end in view.

My favorite preacher, of all those who came from time to time to help in the communion meetings, was Dr. James M. Wharey, who was pastor of the Rocky River Church, and later of the First Church of Mooresville. He was a large man and preached with deep emotion. Not only so, but he used many illustrations taken from everyday life, or from his experiences as a chaplain in the Confederate Army. That kind of preaching

made a larger appeal to a boy than abstract theological sermons. But the one sermon that I remember most distinctly was preached by the Rev. Paul P. Winn on a Communion Sunday, in which he described most vividly and realistically the crucifixion of our Lord. It was during one of those meetings that I united with the church on May 6, 1883.

MEETINGS OF THE PRESBYTERY

From time to time the Presbytery of Concord has met at Thyatira. I remember some of those meetings and they were high occasions. In the horse and buggy days the Presbytery met for several days at a time. Some of the members had to come a long way in buggies or on horseback. They were entertained in the homes of the people and their horses were cared for in our barns. Dr. Jethro Rumple, who was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Salisbury from 1860 to 1906, was always a guest in our home on such occasions. He was a well-informed and scholarly man, and I still remember how I hung on his words as he talked with my father and mother.

In those days the people counted it a privilege to have the ministers and elders as guests in their homes. Not only so, but the people attended the meetings of the Presbytery in large numbers. They seemed to enjoy the discussions. They especially enjoyed the social hour during dinner, when a basket dinner was served on the church grounds.

I also remember, with what I hope is pardonable pleasure, the meeting of the Presbytery at Thyatira in September, 1924, when, as retiring Moderator, I had the privilege of preaching the opening sermon and presiding until a new Moderator was elected. The new Moderator was my brother, the late Thomas W. Lingle.

MODES OF TRAVEL

Nothing illustrates more strikingly the changes that have taken place in the church and in the community than the changes in the modes of travel used by the people in getting to church. In his Centennial Address, Dr. S. C. Alexander referred to the fact that Mr. Alexander Lowrance, then seventy-eight years of age, frequently walked to church, a distance of three or four miles. A great many people, even those living at a distance, walked to church in those early days. A considerable number of people still walked to church in my boyhood days. Will Rogers, the humorist and philosopher, said that people nowadays have ridden so much in automobiles that it winds them to walk to the garage.

In my boyhood days the larger families came to Thyatira in two-horse wagons. Each wagon had its regular place to stop. Ours stopped just east of the church. A few people came in big old-fashioned buggies, with large wheels and high dashboard. Some came on horseback.

Next came the phaeton. The John K. Grahams had the first one of these. Others came later. About the same time smaller buggies began to appear. As phaetons, carriages and buggies became more common, the wagons began to disappear. Then came the Model T Ford. They soon displaced other modes of travel. When good roads came, the Fords were gradually displaced by higher priced cars. So today the visitor to Thyatira will see a great array of automobiles that are just as attractive as those he will see parked around the churches in any of the neighboring towns. It would be wonderful if a church could grow as rapidly in spiritual things as it does in material comfort.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Thyatira rejoices in the number of her sons and daughters who have entered the ministry or some form of mission work. The list for the first hundred years is not complete. We can give only those whose names we know.

Foote in his Sketches of North Carolina says that two of the sons of Dr. Samuel Eusebius McCorkle became ministers. Dr McCorkle himself was a Thyatira boy.

The Rev. Josiah McCorkle was in the ministry only one year prior to his death in Fayetteville, N. C.

The Rev. Abner W. McCorkle, entered the ministry, moved to Tennessee and died there in 1844.

The Rev. William Stewart, the son of an early elder, entered the ministry, according to a statement made by Dr. S. C. Alexander in his history of Thyatira.

Dr. Alexander also states that William Bowman, another elder, had two sons who became ministers and moved to the southwest.

The Rev. Eli W. Caruthers, D.D., a distinguished preacher and author, was a Thyatira boy. In an article written in 1850, he says: "I was born within the limits of Dr. McCorkle's congregation (in 1793), was baptized by him in infancy and spent several of my earlier years under his pastoral care." Dr. Caruthers was pastor of the Alamance Church near Greensboro from 1821 to 1861. His death occurred in 1865 and there is a handsome monument to his memory in the Alamance churchyard.

The Rev. William Thomas Hall, D.D., L.L.D., was born in 1835, ordained in 1859, was pastor of several churches, among them the First Presbyterian Church of Lynchburg, Virginia, and then Professor of Theology in Columbia Theological Seminary. In 1902 he was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, commonly called the Southern Presbyterian Church. Dr. Hall was an infant in arms when his father became pastor of Thyatira, and was eleven years of age when his father left, so he was a Thyatira boy.

The Rev. Kiah Price Julian was a native of Rowan. His boyhood home was several miles east of Thyatira on the highway to Salisbury. He united with Thyatira on profession of his faith on January 8, 1868. Later he moved his membership to Salisbury. In reality he was a Thyatira boy. He was ordained in 1881, was pastor of churches in Virginia and in Florida and died in Floyd County, Virginia in 1889.

The Rev. William H. Lingle, D.D., son of Wilson A. and Martha Jane Lingle, went to Illinois when he was a young man and moved his church membership to Hillsboro, Illinois. He graduated from Blackburn College and then from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago in 1890. Soon after that he went to China under the Foreign Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. After having done heroic work as a missionary for forty-three years, he retired to Pasadena, California, where he died on October 29, 1941.

The Rev. Walter L. Lingle, D.D., L.L.D., the son of Wilson A. and Martha Jane Lingle, graduated from Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary, and was ordained September 26, 1897. He was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Dalton, Georgia; of the First Presbyterian Church of Rock Hill, South Carolina; and of the First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta. From 1911 to 1924 he was a professor in Union Theological Seminary. Then he was president of the Assembly's Training School in Richmond for five years. From 1929 to 1941 he was president of Davidson College. Since 1941 he has been president-emeritus. In 1915 he was Moderator of the Synod of North Carolina, and in 1920 Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern). He is the author of a number of books and has written a page in the Christian Observer every week for the past seventeen years.

The Rev. Thomas W. Lingle, Ph.D., son of Wilson A. and Martha Jane Lingle, graduated from Davidson College, the University of Leipsic (Germany), and Princeton Theological Seminary. For three years he was a professor in McKenzie College, Sao Paulo, Brazil. After that he was

president of Blackburn College in Illinois. From 1908 to 1937 he was a professor in Davidson College. He was a great traveler in Europe and Asia. In 1925 he represented the Presbyterian Church in the United States at the meeting of the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance in Cardiff, Wales.

The Rev. James William Goodman, son of Alfred F. and Rebecca Goodman, graduated from Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary, and was ordained in September, 1898. He was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of High Point, N. C.; of the Presbyterian Church of Hillsboro, N. C.; of Buffalo Church near Greensboro; of Hawfields near Graham; and of Antioch Church in Fayetteville Presbytery. He died on February 13, 1924, and was buried in Thyatira Cemetery.

The Rev. John G. Varner, D.D., the son of Calvin M. and Cornelia Carrigan Varner, graduated from Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary and was ordained in November, 1900. He was pastor of a number of churches in Texas, where he was held in high esteem. He was stated clerk of Paris Presbytery for a total of seventeen years and of Dallas Presbytery for eight years. His last pastorate was at Bonham, Texas. His death occurred April 24, 1942.

The Rev. James Floyd Menius, son of James M. and Martha Cook Menius, graduated from Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary and was ordained in 1915. For several years he was an evangelist in Holston Presbytery. After that he was pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Lillington, N. C. for seventeen years. From 1938 to 1943 he was pastor of the Vanguard Presbyterian Church in Raleigh. Since 1943 he has been pastor of a group of churches in Fayetteville Presbytery.

The Rev. Frank Fisher Baker, D.D., son of Samuel F. and Alice Houck Baker, after graduating from Davidson College, spent several years in educational work in Brazil. After that he graduated from Union Theological Seminary and was ordained in 1919. Since then he has devoted his life to evangelistic and educational work in Brazil. In recognition of his ability and distinguished service, Davidson College conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1937.

The Rev. Daniel T. Caldwell, D.D., son of John S. and Anna Brown Caldwell, graduated from Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary, and was ordained in July, 1917. He served as pastor of Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, N. C. (1918-1925), and of the Second Presbyterian Church of Petersburg, Virginia (1925-1941), and was director of the Defense Service Council with headquarters in Richmond from 1941 to 1947. At present he is Director of Christian Education for the

Synod of North Carolina. In 1941 he was Moderator of the Synod of Virginia.

The Rev. Ernest Gilmer Clary, son of Thomas Lee and Emma Silliman Clary, graduated from Davidson College in 1916, served as a soldier for the duration of World War I, graduated from Union Theological Seminary in 1922, and was ordained in July, 1922. He served as pastor at Murphy, N. C., and Symrna, Georgia, and then served as Chaplain of the noted Berry Schools, Rome, Georgia, for nine years. He is now pastor of Loyd Church, La Grange, Georgia.

The Rev. William Payne Brown, son of the Rev. E. D. and Frances Payne Brown, graduated from Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary, and was ordained in July, 1930. For several years he was pastor of the Presbyterian church in Edenton, N. C., and then of the Vanguard Presbyterian Church in Raleigh. After that he was the missionary pastor of Bream Memorial Church in Charleston, West Virginia. In 1938, because of ill health, he retired from the active pastorate and went into business in Charleston. He still continues to preach as he has opportunity and his health permits.

The Rev. Clyde R. McCubbins, D.D., son of J. Absalom and Elizabeth (Bettie) Lingle McCubbins, attended the Westminster Presbyterian School and then served as a soldier and officer in the United States Army for a dozen or more years. In the army he pursued a number of courses of study. In 1928 he completed the course of study in Union Theological Seminary and was ordained on July 15, 1928. Since then he has held pastorates in Virginia, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Florida, and is now pastor at Filbert, South Carolina.

The Rev. George Foyle Houck, the son of George F. and Fannie Goodman Houck, is a graduate of Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary, and was ordained in July, 1931. He was pastor of a group of churches near Lexington, Virginia, for five years, of Sinking Springs Church in Virginia for four years, of Fuller Memorial Church in Durham, N. C., for several years, and is now pastor at Candor, N. C.

The Rev. Samuel Miller Houck, son of George F. and Fannie Goodman Houck, graduated from Maryville College, in Tennessee, and from Union Theological Seminary, and was ordained in July, 1940. He served as pastor at Narrows, Virginia for several years and is now pastor of Concord Presbyterian Church in Iredell County, N. C.

Ella I. Graham, daughter of John K. and Mary Jane Graham, went as a missionary to Korea in 1907, and after having rendered devoted and

heroic service for twenty-three years, passed to her eternal reward on September 18, 1930. Her body was buried in Korea, but it is fitting that a gravestone was erected to her memory in the family plot in the Thyatira Cemetery.

Myrtle Lingle McCubbins, daughter of J. Absalom and Elizabeth (Bettie) Lingle McCubbins, graduated from the Western College for Women, Oxford, Ohio, and went to China as a missionary under the Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., in 1907. After she and her husband, the Rev. D. E. Crabb, had served many years in China, they retired and are now living at Altadena, California.

Mary Lee Sloan, daughter of William J. and Kate Lingle Sloan, went as a missionary to China in 1919. There she served with great fidelity until driven out by the Japanese during World War II. Since that time she has been working in the office of the Defense Service Council in Richmond.

Elizabeth Corriher, daughter of George W. and Mrs. C. C. Corriher, went to China as a graduate nurse in 1908 and rendered a large service in connection with medical missions in China.

Two daughters of the church have married Presbyterian ministers and along with their husbands have rendered a noble service. They are Cora Belle Sloan (Mrs. D. T. Caldwell), daughter of William J. and Kate Lingle Sloan; and Martha Houck (Mrs. J. Ray Dickens), daughter of George F. and Fannie Goodman Houck.

Lucile Miller, daughter of E. Scott and Cornelia Sloop Miller, after graduating from the General Assembly's Training School in Richmond, and from the General Hospital in Philadelphia, engaged in religious and public health work from 1930-1938, and then married Mr. J. W. Johnson, who is a deacon in the First Presbyterian Church of Fayetteville. She is now an active worker in that church.

Helen Jamison Miller, daughter of E. Scott and Cornelia Sloop Miller, after having studied at Catawba College, taught school for a number of years and then in 1933 married Rev. Roy Chase Whisenhunt a minister of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. As the wife of the minister she has been active in the work of the Church. Their home is now in Concord, North Carolina.

In addition to these sons and daughters, I have before me the names of sixteen descendents of Thyatira who entered the ministry, and three women who have done missionary work. These might be called grandsons

DAUGHTERS OF THE CHURCH



MRS. MYRTLE MCCUBBINS CRABB

MISS MARY LEE SLOAN

MISS ELLA GRAHAM

MISS ELIZABETH CORRIHER, R.N.

MRS. MARTHA HOUCK DICKENS

and granddaughters. When these are added to the sons and daughters, it makes a goodly list.

To these should be added the laymen and laywomen who have gone out from Thyatira into other churches and other states and have there been consecrated church workers. And to all these should be added the hundreds and even thousands, of men and women who have, during the past two hundred years, lived in the Thyatira community and rendered a consecrated service to the Lord through the mother church. All these forces put together make a great host. When we think of it, we begin to realize that the Lord has done marvelous things in and through the influence of the church which our forefathers planted in the wilderness nearly two hundred years ago. Its influence has gone out into the uttermost parts of the earth.

O God of Bethel, by whose hand
Thy people still are fed,
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led.
Our vows, our prayers we now present
Before Thy throne of Grace
God of our fathers, be the God
Of their succeeding race.

AUTHORITIES CONSULTED

1. Minutes of the Session and other records of Thyatira Church.
2. Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia.
3. Inscriptions on the five hundred and more gravestones in Thyatira Cemetery.
4. Deeds and documents in the Office of Register of Deeds in Salisbury, N. C.
5. Documents in the Historical Foundation at Montreat, N. C.
6. Minutes of Orange and Concord Presbyteries.
7. Minutes of the General Assembly.
8. Sprague's Annals of the American Pulpit.
9. History of Thyatira by Drs. S. C. Alexander and T. W. Lingle.
10. History of Rowan County by Dr. Jethro Rumple.
11. Sketches of North Carolina by Dr. William Henry Foote.
12. History of the University of North Carolina by Dr. Kemp P. Battle.
13. The Prophet of Zion-Parnassus by James F. Hurley and Julia Goode Eagan.

Where authorities disagree as to dates and facts, as they frequently do, I have recorded what seemed to be the truth after weighing the evidences.

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